

**The body of the relationship: a practice-based exploration of the relationship between the body and its environment informed by the notion of *Butoh-body*.  
Three case studies in time-based art.**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://bbeyond.live/> Bbeyond is a performance art collective existing since 2001, it is formed by local and international artists. Bbeyond members perform all over the world.

## Glossary of terms

**Acting-intuition:** A term coined by Nishida Kitaro in reference to the state of consciousness when handling material or tools compared to flow.

***Butoh-body*:** A term coined by Toshiharu Kasai in reference to the philosophical connotations of the performing body of *Butoh* dancers.

***Butoh-fu*:** Notational system of *Butoh* which is archived at Hijikata Tatsoumi's scrap books. It contained a complex combination of visual collage and poetic language.

***Butoh-tai*:** The term referred to the bond of *Butoh* dancers with their environment.

***Basho*:** A term referring to the concept of (lived) space coined by Nishida Kitaro.

**Immersion:** The state of consciousness where the body is perceiving its environment as non separate from the self.

**Immersivity:** The quality of being when in the state of immersion.

**Kinaesthetic:** A category of perception that encompasses our body awareness of its position and movement by means of sensory organs.

**Phenomenological:** An approach relating to the study of consciousness and the objects of direct experience.

**Lived experience:** The representation and understanding our our experience under a phenomenological perspective.

***Life-death*:** A concept related to the non binary perception of reality related to the *Butoh-body* aesthetics.

**Liminal:** Relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process.

**Liminoid:** A term coined by Victor Turner in order to signpost liminal collective experiences during rituals.

***Ma*:** A term stemming from Zehn Buddhism that defines the notion of space as indivisible from time, hence depending on our lived experience.

**Nikutai:** A term coined by *Butoh* dancer Masaki Iwana in reference to *Butoh*-dancers consciousness and individual memory.

**Performative installation:** A term coined by Angelica Nollert in reference to a branch of Installation art that is developed around issues of performativity.

**Performative:** Relating to the expressive and communication impact of our presence and actions.

**Performativity:** A term firstly coined by J.L. Austin that refers to the quality of being performative and its potential to bring social change.

**Pure experience:** A concept coined by Nishida Kitaro in reference to a state of presence where the individual is fully engaged with *Acting intuition*.

**Theatricality:** A term coined by Michael Fried in reference to the ability of arts to invoke audience's attention to performativity being its central axis.

**Temporality:** Relating to our time perception in reference to its progression.

## Abstract

The research explores the deployment of drama-based methods, in particular *Butoh* dance within visual art practices namely installation art in order to enhance participants' immersivity. In doing so, the thesis is crafted in a way that initially provides the reader with a brief overview of the two major disciplines involved locating the project within the relevant hitherto arts movements, their history and evolution.

In a second stance, the notion of the *Butoh-body* and its relevance to this practice-based exploration is discussed. Further light is shed upon the understanding of the term immersion in the context of this project. The term immersion is here supported theoretically by an illustration of resonating concepts arising in Japanese phenomenology with main figure Kitaro Nishida. In order to highlight Nishida's point of view upon the modality with which our body interrelates to its environment in the "Acting intuition" state—here linked to the state of immersion—, a more expanded discussion that compares and analyses Western phenomenological concepts is developed with reference to—among others—Merleau-Ponty's thoughts upon "intercorporeality" and Bennett's approach towards New materialism and Ecological thinking.

This practice-based exploration concerns the relationship between the body (participant) and its environment (performative installation) and consists of three time-based art major research installations informed by the notion of *Butoh-body*. The thesis is thereafter articulated as chapters that exist separately and inter-dependently around the axis of the research installations: *Seabed*, *Waste-is-land*, *Sky-field 1 & 2*. The research design (creation process) of the above-mentioned

research installations is analysed and theoretical argumentation about the choices made by the researcher is given. The data gathered from participants' feedback forms are available in a separate section at the end of the thesis whereas all chapters include an analysis of the experience and a conclusion section after each experimentation.

This research aims to act as a map explaining forces at work and interrelations of different fields of enquiry to artists, scholars and researchers that wish to develop an immersive performative experiment; they would be enriched by the analysis, observation and evaluation of its process. Moreover, this thesis attempts to create a dialogue among art and drama theorists such as Kirby and Schechner in the area of performativity. Moreover, by positioning the research among other practitioners' artworks the researcher aims to offer a contextualization of a niche field. For this reason, a great time is spent on the tracing of the field as this is perceived to offer deeper understanding to an ever-growing interest to develop interdisciplinary projects of this nature in the contemporary arts. My aspiration is that this thesis would hopefully be read as an insightful proposal for further enhancement of performative hybrid practices bridging gaps between disciplines.



## Chapter 1

### Title of the research

The *body of the relationship*: A practice-based exploration of the relationship between the body and its environment informed by the notion of *Butoh-body*.

### 1 Research focus

This research addresses the issue of interrelation between the human body and its surroundings through performance-based exploration. The research questions emerged from the phenomenological observation of my lived experience moving to Ireland as I became aware of the internal modifications of my body in relation to its context. The consciousness of the receptivity and malleability of my body toward what stands beyond its physical limits provided the focus of my research and subsequently the literature review. Therefore, the overall project has been shaped by the constant feed of the experiential, practical and theoretical. This personal experience offered insight into the phenomenon of how, when two entities exist, a third one is de facto created from their interrelation which in this case—the two entities—would be the body and its environment. For the purposes of this research, I have dubbed this term: the *body of the relationship*. In my review of the literature and practitioners that tackle this topic being based on my previous experience as a *Butoh* practitioner, I encountered the notion of *Butoh-body*; therefore, the notion of *Butoh-body* and Japanese phenomenology concepts with concern to the subject- object relationship, offer a framework as well as a practical “guide” for my practice in this

research project. Toshiharu Kasai explains the underlying philosophical principles of *Butoh-body* in his paper *A Note on Butoh Body* (Kasai 2000, pp. 353-360). This concept incorporates and demonstrates my own insight in a systematic and articulated way. In this research, I am focussing at *Butoh-tai*: a concept which refers to the bond between the body and its environment as it is perceived in *Butoh*. I am analysing each encounter between the body and its environment as denoted by the activated “space” between and around the meeting parts. An encounter has both spatial and temporal components, which constitutes a lived experience. My research seeks to evoke and explore this “experiential space” (*Butoh-tai*) through installation artworks.

### **1.1 Key explanation of the research**

This project is aiming to fill in a gap in knowledge which will be introduced and contextualized in the current section. The perceived gap is identified in the creation process of installation art: my thesis claims that although temporality is an aspect of the spectators’ experience evoked within installation art, it is not given the respective importance it might deserve as a factor that has to be pre-designed. My suggestion is to pay equally attention to the temporality to the attention that is given when the piece is manufactured physically. This research deploys a body-based method (*Butoh*) in order to enrich and awaken the spatial-temporal consciousness which I claim to be under-investigated in a methodic way in time-based art; however often the subject of time-based art is that of the experience of the spectator, there is little awareness about the factors that would allow the artist/maker to be provident of the temporal modalities with which our bodies operate. My research focuses on the

adaptation of concepts and practices in *Butoh* to installation iterations that are activated by the bodily experience of the viewer. This approach is inter-connected with the immediacy of the experience and allows me to be more precise and empathic considering the perception effect that is generated because it stems from my own embodied experience.

## **1.2 Field of the research**

In the following paragraphs, I will be offering a brief chronological overview of the history of installation art in order to explain why this project falls within the Performative installation umbrella. Thereafter, the discussion will unfold upon how *Butoh* dance shares similar points of view with the above-mentioned artistic practices with the aim to highlight that an interdisciplinary approach of those apparently disparate areas is useful for the purpose of this research.

In the contemporary art scene, the vast field of installation art has been subdivided in different branches. The present research is operating within the field of Performative installation, a term that has often been misinterpreted as including a performance, usually done by the author, taking place within an installation. Angelica Nollert is an art historian and director of the Neue Sammlung (New Collection), the international design museum housed within the Pinakothek der Moderne art museum in Munich. Nollert offers an insightful definition of the term by isolating the inherent phenomena displayed on this type of artistic works that are being referred to as Performative installations:

- 1) The event aspect of the performativity (the moment, now) is linked to the materiality of an installation in the sense of simultaneousness of action and experience.
- 2) Performativity is a constitutive part of the installation.
- 3) The installation alone is what generates the performativity.
- 4) A Performative installation has its own individual context that embraces and incorporates categories from everyday routine and life.
- 5) The extent of the performativity of an installation cannot be completely controlled here. (Nollert 2003, p. 13)

The nature of my research, constitutes a common ground within Performative installation practices and is described by Nollert as: “not about dissolving the work through the event but about the event as a constitutive force of the installation, a kind of symbiosis between the work and the event...Performative installation appeals to the visitor directly and immediately...Thus, the relationship between the subject and the object shifts and the subject then becomes part of the work.” (Nollert 2003, p. 14)

In other words, the attention of the artist is not placed to the objecthood of the installation art, seen as an assemblage of sculptural outcomes situated to the gallery space but to the potentiality to generate a space that gets fueled by the spectator’s response.

A dialectic relationship between the viewer and the artwork has been gradually established with Modernism. Rosalind Krauss asserts that about 1950s, modernist sculpture became being “the negative condition of the monument...it had a kind of idealist space to explore...but became to be experienced more and more as pure negativity.” (Krauss 1979, p.34) She suggests that “modernist sculpture was defined

as ‘a combination of exclusions.’ (ibid, p.36) Therefore, since modernist sculpture, a predecessor of installation art, begun to deal with notions of absence—hence evoking presence—this has caused a significant shift from what is perceived (artwork) to the field of perception itself (bond between spectator and artwork). Moreover, Krauss explains that “the expanded field is generated by problematizing a series of oppositions between which the modernist category is suspended.” (ibid, p. 38) It is always an in-between space or definition that marks post-modernity—the artistic era occurring after Modernism. My research will unfold in exactly this grey area of uncertainty, bridging interdisciplinary forms of art.

In the early 1960s Minimalism has challenged the idealist hermeticism of the autonomous art object by deflecting its meaning to the space of its presentation. (Suderburg 2000) Not much later, installation art arose from “Environment(s)” (Brayshaw & Witts 2014, p.268) that signaled the development of the conceptual framework of Minimalist movement. Installation art is a term that refers to hybrid art forms and comprises a multiplicity of activities that span from traditional forms of Zen garden to contemporary ones such as set design, bricolage, and Happenings, multimedia projections, Arte Povera, land art. Therefore, it is the notion of the space now informed by a contextual thinking that is primarily challenged by installation artists; space is not anymore seen and perceived as an abstract unit wherein detached artworks are displayed. Richard Schechner notes that “Happenings are rooted in two seemingly unrelated interests: (1) an attempt to bring into a celebratory space the full “message-complexity” of a downtown street and (2) a playing with modes of perception.” (Schechner 2003, p. 217) He highlights that “Happenings are different from their historical and theoretical predecessors: Absurd theatre, Artaud, Surrealism and Dada...” (ibid) because in the above-mentioned forms, the focus is

upon the message received whereas in Happenings “the thing-done is no longer any more important than those who do it and those who witness it.” (Ibid) Therefore, Happenings are launching the placement of attention towards the event itself; the lived space in between audience, performer and artwork plus the modalities with which that takes place. This approach that envisions the space as a hosting structure for lived experience incorporating art objects, performers and audience is in line with the research design of the current practice-based research project. The research supports and inquires upon the enactment of the space by exploring its potentialities to be shaped by participants’ experiences and vice versa.

According to Michel de Certeau (1984) “a space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities and time variables. Thus, space is composed of intersection of mobile elements...it is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it...space is a *practiced place*.” (Certeau 1984, p.117) Certeau argues that in relation to the place, space is “like the word when it is spoken, caught in the ambiguity of an actualization.” (Ibid) In addition, Douglas Crimp (1993, p.17) states that in site-specific practices, not only “the displacement of the artist-subject to the ‘spectator-subject’ takes place but also the interrelation of object and content is the motor of the reception of the piece.” In other words, the art object or event has to be experienced in the here and now through the bodily presence of the viewer. The senses of the viewer are called into action in the immediacy of spatial-temporal experience. Fried refers to this modality of reception with the word *theatricality* (2011) in a critical manner. Faye Ran mentions that “in the summer of 1967, Artforum published Fried’s essay ‘Art and Objethood,’ which was both an attack on the Minimalists and a defense of Abstract Expressionist values.” (Ran 2009, p.176). Fried was fearing the contamination of art from theatre as he

regarded them as opponents that depended on each other's defeat in order to survive. "Any physical or psychological awareness which arose as a result of attention to social or institutional settings, or the interaction or relationship between spectator and object constituted Fried's abhorred state of 'in-betweenness' or 'theater.'" (Ibid). As Ran, comments, this description ironically is foregrounding post-modern Performance art. The notion of theatricality is relevant here as it condenses and makes noticeable the layer of experience that I am addressing in my research while placing disciplines of art and theatre in direct dialogue among each other. The same term is used by sculptor and installation artist Phylinda Barlow: "Theatricality and time became absorbed into all aspects of sculpture. Released from its history of permanency and absolute materiality, sculpture could fragment space, could be cinematic in its relationship to how to occupy space...Objects...would change with atmospheric and moody resonances..." (Barlow 2000, p. 212) The terms encountered above, namely theatricality and cinematic would incorporate movement in their meaning. Therefore, they invite us to relate with the freshness and immediacy of the experience. In the current project they function as pre-signals for the realization of the significance of the ways that we inhabit space. In a second reading, those realizations might facilitate and justify a more accurate consideration of the bodily presence of the spectator in art making.

Claire Bishop comments upon Fried's argument of Minimalist art being more akin to theater than to sculpture because of its sharing space-time with the viewers as follows: "Fried's argument hinges on the idea of temporality: rather than existing in a transcendent time and place, Minimalist sculpture responds to its environment. The experience of viewing it is therefore marked by 'duration' (like theatre) because it directly solicits the viewer's presence." (Bishop 2005, p. 53) Hence, theatricality

makes it vital to consider the temporal dimension of the experience of the spectator. Besides, Morris distinguishes “two types of selves known to the self, the “I” and the “me,” which denote two fundamental types of perception: that of temporal space and that of static, immediately present objects. The “I” which is essentially imageless, corresponds with the perception of space unfolding in the continuous present. The “me”, a retrospective constituent, parallels the mode of object perception.” (2004, p.1) The distinction between two types of selves by Morris, sowed the seeds of a further discussion upon modalities of presence and perception within art spaces and initiated an active addressing of the viewer.

Bishop is discussing the importance of the modalities with which we are addressing the viewer in her book *Installation art* (2005). For Bishop: (2005, p. 6) “...rather than regarding the viewer as a pair of disembodied eyes that survey the work from a distance, installation art presupposes an embodied viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision.” Bishop makes a distinction between the ideas that stand at the core of this relationship with the viewer, delineating between “activating or decentering the viewing subject.” (Bishop 2005, p. 11) This idea of addressing the viewer becomes clearer when she refers to Kaprow, the initiator of Happenings. Happenings are an artistic practice that took place at the same historical period (in the US and Europe) with the emergence of *Butoh* (Japan) —which constitutes the axis of this project. “Kaprow claimed that he wasn’t installing anything to be looked at...but something to be played in, participated in by visitors who then became co-creators.” (Bishop 2005, p. 24) He was literally staging events that occurred in parallel with the everyday life of the participants by handing them a script to follow. The difference from theatre was that Kaprow’s script was not a text to be acted by professional actors but a set of actions



to be performed by participants. This script of intertwined actions would finally generate an event that occurred in a given space and time in response to what is already there.

*Butoh* is actually exploring the same key area (as Happenings) of intersection between presence, temporality, space and experience approaching it from the point of view of the performer. However, it is still the very bond of the body that which is subjected to research, each time from a different focal point. The reason for choosing to deepen to *Butoh* for the aims of this research project, is that *Butoh* is not only a dance form but also a mental and physical approach (Kasai 1999). The dancer activates a particular state of consciousness when *Butoh* is performed, which is characterized as “non-objectification.” (Kasai 2000, p.353) *Butoh-body* encompasses a process of integration between the dichotomized subject (according to Descartes’ body-mind dualism) and object and apart from being an art form constitutes also a method of psychosomatic exploration. (Kasai 1999, p. 309) In my research, the viewer is seen as the subject and their surroundings constitute the object or the *otherness*, that which lies beyond the visible boundaries of the body. In analogy to the *Butoh-body* notion— here seen as a unifying process of the distinct territories (body and its surroundings) illustrated above—Nollert notes that in performative installations “the borders between within and without blur...the instability of the spatial relationships is intentional.” (Nollert 2003, p. 185) My exploration seeks to redefine this thin line of perception and discover through the process of loss of the ordinary and already known the boundaries between the body and the environment.

The common element that connects these apparently different kinds of artistic practice -installation art and *Butoh*- is performativity. This term derives from the field

of literary studies and was originally coined by the philosopher J. L. Austin who introduced the speech act theory (1962). Austin mentioned that “a performative utterance is an utterance through which precisely that act described by the utterance is accomplished.” (Nollert 2003, p. 9) Our understanding of this very term of performativity has been shifting through art history and nowadays we encounter disparate points of view “in works of prominent performance theorists such as the Scottish anthropologist Victor Turner that introduced a discussion upon liminal states of presence (Loxley 2007, p.141) as well as in Judith Butler’s “speaking of gender as an act.” (Ibid) Moreover, as Loxley mentions, Schechner’s contribution to the foundation of the discipline of performance studies—which is the discipline that studies performativity—was significant: “For Schechner, performance was emphatically not just what happened in a clearly demarcated space” but “the whole range of experiences that surround the site and duration of theatre.” (Ibid). Performativity is a fluid and ambiguous term that escapes any easy definition because it incorporates elements of ephemerality and unpredictability. However, there is a common point in all the above-mentioned points of view upon performativity; its very relationship with the present moment, its *nowness*.

### **1.3 Context and overview of the research: Performative installation**

This research is practice-based (Candy 2006 quoted in Smith and Dean 2011, p. 5) and theory related. “For her (Candy), in practice-based research the creative work acts as a form of research.” (Smith and Dean 2011, p. 5) My project falls under the umbrella of the Performative research. (Haseman 2014, p. 150) Haseman coined the term Performative research in order to identify the methods deployed in a practice-

based research. Performative research differentiates itself from the qualitative research, because it focuses to the ontological rather than the epistemic character of the studied phenomenon; this means that I am dealing with the nature of the experience as such. I am not attempting to describe it as a cause-effect phenomenon and quantify its manifestation as a quantitative researcher might do. Neither do I try to describe with words a phenomenon as it occurs (qualitative research). Performative research is creating this very phenomenon through practice-based exploration. For this reason, artistic creation is the most suitable medium in order to conduct performative research. The studied phenomenon of my research encompasses physical, emotional and conceptual dimension; artistic creation embodies all the above-mentioned layers. Subsequently, I am going to adopt qualitative methods in the discussion of the performative research. Haseman (ibid) asserts that this type of research is multifaceted and constitutes situated knowledge; it deploys symbolic data—such as images, live action and more—in order to convey embodied meanings rather than using a numeric or language data. The above explanation introduces the artistic methods that I am going to adopt in order to pursue this research. I am aiming primarily to a tacit form of knowledge, an individual meaning that the viewer grasps through his/ her guided immersion in a situation. It could not be transferred to him/her through the mere description of what occurred because it is related to the experience.

*Butoh* provides the platform for this research's unfolding. Different researchers and artists have engaged with *Butoh* as an art form and adapted it into their own practice; Rachel Sweeny (2009) has conducted a practice-based PhD research that addresses the role of physical awareness in *Butoh* and its application into Performance art. Her project was hosted by Middlesex University. Martine Vialle is a

contemporary performance artist that investigates the Japanese concept of *Ma* (the experiential space) central also in *Butoh* practice in her performances (see chapter 2, Enabling voids: the concept of *Ma*, p. 72). Christine Bellerose (2015) has conducted her Doctoral dissertation upon *Ma* and the relationship between *Butoh*, Durational performance art and Somatics at York University, Toronto. Shane Caldwell (2017) in his Master thesis, treated the differences and similarities between *Butoh*, dance and performance art awarded by Victoria University of Wellington. Kantinkoski, Helena (2017) wrote her BA thesis upon the importance of perception in *Butoh*. The thesis is entitled *Non-performing: Liminality and Embodiment in Butô Dance* and was awarded by the University of Stockholm, Department of Asian, Middle Eastern and Turkish Studies. My practice-based research aims to enrich the field of installation art with elements of *Butoh* practice and hopefully generate new knowledge upon immersive environments' creation process.

This research is structured in a series of art practice experimentations, focussing on the exploration of the *body of the relationship*. I am looking at what occurs in between the perceiver and the perceived and I use the experience of this encounter as a primary source for articulating artistic practice. The research process and its outcomes are interdisciplinary, and they manifest themselves as Performative installations; environments that are pointing to the human body. Thus, the research design will consider the dimension of the human body and its presence in activating the artwork itself. This particular ideation of the practice is related to the interchangeable nature of the body and its environment according to the *Butoh-body* notion. I have been running three major research iterations (which I entitle here as encounters) in order to highlight the chronological order and evolution through the iterations. Encounters are existing as independent events whereas they are

interdependent within the scopes of this project. Encounters are performative installations, fruit of the research process encompassing my artistic practice and lived experience informed by the site-specificity of my presence in Ireland in conjunction with the interpretation of the embodied knowledge gained in two intensive seminars of *Butoh* dance and relevant theoretical deepening on the researched topic.

During the first two years of the research I enhanced my prior experience as a *Butoh* practitioner, by attending two *Butoh* seminars; On October 2017, a 10 days' intensive workshop by Atsushi Takenouchi held in Tuscany (Italy). Takenouchi is a *Butoh* dancer and choreographer that offers annually six months intensive *Butoh* workshop. Takenouchi has worked in person with Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata (the founders of *Butoh*) in the past and during the workshop delivered an anthology of *Butoh-fu* (scores) and technique. Subsequently I attended a 5 days' workshop in June 2018 delivered by Masaki Iwana in Athens (Greece). Iwana is a *Butoh* performer, choreographer and filmmaker and writer of *Butoh*. His teaching method included an intense training and *Butoh-fu* followed by improvisation-based research to movement. The first encounter is entitled *Seabed* and draws from the elaboration of the spatial components arising from Jinen *Butoh* of Atsushi Takenouchi. The second encounter is *Waste-is-land*; and is based on my own experimentations and phenomenological exploration of my lived experience in Ireland under the lens of *Butoh-body*. The third encounter is *Sky-field* whereby I further expand, deploy and elaborate elements of Iwana's spatial approach into a mixed media artwork that includes technological outputs in correlation with bodily based movement.

The overall contribution to knowledge will be the cultivation of an alternative temporal- spatial consciousness of the viewers by enhancing their bodily awareness.

This particular modality of perception is defined as immersion (I will refer to my understanding of this term within the premises of this project later in this chapter). Immersion is reached through a call of the viewer into the here and now placing the materiality of the space at its core. I will experiment with the temporal dimension of installation art whilst also engaging with the performativity of the event. The above-mentioned projects are inquiring into the possibilities of creating an integration, a synergy between the audience's bodies and their environment. The aim of the research is to expand the way in which the body becomes aware of the ways it perceives the world. Leder mentions the paradoxical way our body functions: "While in one sense the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives, it is also characterized by absence. That is, one's own body is rarely the thematic object of the experience." (Leder 1990, p. 1) Combined with this thought, by placing the body at the center of the experience I am attempting to awaken its awareness. This project is seeking to transfer and explore the creative potentialities of alternative ontological perspectives upon the body and its interactivity with the space.

#### **1.4 Why *Butoh* acts as the axis of this project: a historical overview**

During the first stages of this research, as I defined my topic of exploration to be that of the *body of the relationship*, I was drawn to *Butoh* among other somatic practices. *Butoh* training was already part of my toolkit as a performer however not in an intensified way. The reason that I opted for the notion of *Butoh-body* derives from the fact that it satisfies some characteristics that suit to the practice-based exploration of immersion in installation art. Firstly, *Butoh* stems from a non-anthropocentric perspective upon life therefore deals with the abstract nature of the entities. As

Fraleigh notes Kazuo Ohno's "ontological and spiritual concerns (are) grounded in bodily experiences of birth, maturation, and death cross national and cultural boundaries [...] Ohno's stage is the world." (Fraleigh & Nakamura 2006, p. 35) Based in my firsthand experience as visual artist, I reckon that this is a common ground in visual arts practice where the human body is part of the volumes in the space and it is not addressed under a personhood reading which could be linked to anthropocentrism. Secondly, *Butoh* addresses the materiality of the body and reconnects it to a pre-subjective level of experience that unfolds in an unconscious, primal level. By deploying visualizations as an open (un-matrixed) process, *Butoh* presupposes individual interpretation, and therefore enables and triggers creativity. In addition, the link between *Butoh* and natural sciences permits me to build and invoke to the audience a series of experiences that transcend narration and move beyond it into a level closer to nature which is here seen both as a concept and form. Ilse Dauwe observes that in practicing *Butoh* "there has to be a strong bond with nature, not rationally, not sentimentally, but physically." (Dauwe 2002, p.87) In addition, Fraleigh points out that this is "a decidedly non-anthropocentric position [...] through intentions of becoming other than human, *butoh* [sic] gives rise to gratitude for the physical world that surrounds and suffuses our human and more-than-human natures." (Fraleigh 2016, p. 62) Therefore, *Butoh* would be described as a proactive stance towards a refined attunement with the nature. This fact operates as a gate in the exploration of the *body of the relationship*.

Wishing to offer a clearer understanding of my choice, it would be useful offering a brief overview of the historical premises that allowed *Butoh* to flourish. B. Waychoff mentions that *Butoh* was created in late 50s by two dancers, T. Hijikata and K. Ohno "as a reaction to the post-war climate and effects of the atomic bombs in Japan."

(Waychoff 2009, p. 44) In his essay 'Butoh, bodies and being', Waychoff offers an overview of the birth of this contemporary Japanese dance form out of the mixing of Japanese theater, Noh and Kabuki and merely as a response to them. Waychoff adds that according to Goodman's chronological study, Kabuki, Japan's traditional form of theater, was based in Japanese religious spirituality and was highly stylized. Kabuki's successor was the pre-war and post-war Shingeki (new theater) led by Osanai Kaoru. Shingeki, in contrast to Kabuki, gave rise to a sense of interiority of the performers and was moved out of traditional religious spaces into public/ secular spaces. (Ibid) According to Waychoff, "young avant-gardes artists saw shingeki as a negative move towards homogenization...as an institution to be transcended." (Ibid) *Butoh*, which was part of the Angura (underground) movement, from one hand refocused modern theater on the body of the actor but also recuperated shamanic properties characteristic of Kabuki. A. Jones refers to a similar trend in Europe and US in the same historical period: " The emergence of the artist's body in the radicalizing 1960s is linked to the problems of subjectivity and sociality endemic to late "pan" capitalism...that demands that individuals 'submit' their bodies so that they can function more efficiently under its obsessively rational imperatives." Hence, it was a broader urge for re-appropriation of one's self through regaining access to one's own body that triggered this artistic movement in that period and spread cross-culturally. This necessity of re-discovering one's self was appearing in a macro- level as a response to the rise of capitalism.

K. Nanako, states that "Hijikata created the term 'ankoku butoh' (transl. dance of the darkness) to denote a cosmological dance which completely departed from existing dances and explored the darkest side of human nature." (Nanako 2000, p.12) Therefore, Hijikata's research was in line with the demand of abolishing norms and



forms imposed by institutional imperatives by referring to the side of life that we choose to overlook and consider outrageous. That outrageousness was simply “the real, in a time when the body is constantly simulated.” (Nanako 2000, p. 25) Part of Hijikata’s research had to do with dwelling in his “childhood experiences rather than techniques acquired later on, admitting that he had no master.” (Dind 2016, p. 59) Fraleigh would describe Hijikata’s approach as “a conscious effort to reconstruct a child’s wisdom, a kind of innocence which children possess.” (Kasai 2003, p. 6) By focusing to the embodied memories of his childhood, he was drawn to the vivid memory of being left for hours inside a hanging basket in the middle of the vast rice fields of Akita while his parents were working as farmers; Hijikata is deeply connected to those primordial embodiments that will influence and form the realization of *Butoh* dance as an anti-conceptual form.

*Butoh* is concerned with an area of research upon the interiority and presence of the performer and this enables me to connect it with spatial practices in the contemporary scene. Iwana defines presence “as the demonstration of life’s own original voices, which are forever being muted by society or institution, in contrast to ‘expression.’” (Iwana 2002, p. 27) Iwana sees expression as “a product of the intellect... a way of being recognized by a society” whereas he sees dancing solo as “the only true way of presenting the dancer’s presence or directness.” (Ibid) Hence, he speaks about a dance that is connected to our “original experience” and inner landscape (*nikutai*) as a state that is dormant into our bodies (Ibid). On the other hand, great part of Installation art especially when dealing with site-specificity, has genuinely tried to encompass the above mentioned by Iwana qualities of a dancer (see also Fried’s term theatricality) through creative strategies aiming to the activation of the spatial awareness of the audience. So, we may assume that in both

cases the nature of the research is similar even if it is approached through different mediums.

Another aspect that brought *Butoh* into my consideration for the current research project is the intersection of different art forms, in particular, visual imagery and poetry. Hijikata developed a notation known as *Butoh-fu* that arrived to us under the form of scrapbooks that have been extensively studied by “Kurt Wurmli [...] who reports that the applications of Hijikata’s *Butoh-fu* are demonstrated in videotapes taken from lectures and workshops held at Keio University and displayed in the ‘Permanent Installation.’” (Fraleigh & Nakamura 2006, pp. 52- 54) Wurmli explains that within the scrapbooks, “the eclectic assemblage of images in Hijikata’s collection range from prehistoric cave paintings to twentieth century street graffiti, including works from all five continents.” (Wurmli 2004, pp. 7-8 quoted by Fraleigh & Nakamura 2006, p. 52) It has been stated that *Butoh-fu* comprised both verbal and visual images for dance and was based on Hijikata’s experiments on surrealist strategies; therefore, *Butoh* could not be seen strictly as a dance form but as an art that embraces all senses and remains a source of inspiration for the visual and performing creation process.



Fig.1& 2 Hijikata, T. *Butoh-fu* notation screened by Waguri, Y. (2015)

#### 1.4.1 *Butoh-sei, Butoh-tai*

My research attempts to transfer the embodied knowledge from the dance seminars and the conceptual enrichment from the literature review by interpreting the philosophical core concepts of *Butoh* into artistic practice outcomes that transcend the medium of dance and explore the *body of the relationship*. “Hijikata would often say something is *Butoh-teki*, *Butoh-like*. ‘Look, isn’t he *Butoh-teki*?’ he would say, or looking at a dog, ‘You see, this dog is *Butoh*!’ He would find the essence of *butoh* [sic] even in non-human creatures including plants.” (Tanaka Min, quoted in Cull 2012, p. 112 quoted in Caldwell 2017, p.4) According to Caldwell, in his written dissertation *Butoh: Granting art status in an indefinable form*, *Butoh* is “rhizomatic” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004). According to Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome is

somewhat like DNA thus is not defined by its formal aspect but for an internal motor that actuates connections with disparate beings: “The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface in all extension in all direction to concretion into bulbs and tubers.”(Ibid, p.7) Also, Andrian Parr notes that “The rhizome conceives how every thing and every body [...] can be seen as multiple in their interrelational movements with other things and bodies [...] the nature of the rhizome is that of a moving matrix.” (Parr 2010, p. 233) Caldwell compares *Butoh* to its two most similar analogues, dance and performance art and examines the way it resembles and differs from each of them (Caldwell 2017, pp.1-5) He therefore points out “how the reason categorizing *Butoh* as only one kind of art is problematic due to its being part of a non-Western aesthetic tradition that does not break the world up into such easily separable pieces.” (Caldwell 2017, p. 2) In support of this suggestion, Caldwell is using Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between arborescent (in reference to western thought) and rhizomatic (in reference to eastern). He states that *Butoh*, as “the Rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo.” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p. 27 quoted in Caldwell 2017, p. 2) He explains this statement by reference to the earliest *Butoh* works that were involving film making and a variety of practices. Caldwell highlights that “there is a *Butoh* infused style of dance, which we call *Butoh*, *Butoh* itself is not the dance...Paintings too, are created by human beings and reveal their ultimate *Butoh* quality [*Butoh-sei*].” (Caldwell 2017, p. 5) The later statement provides another explanation of the use of *Butoh* principles and embodiment within the current project which is by its nature hybrid.

Kasai, in his attempt to grasp the essence of *Butoh*, identified a series of principles that have been mainly expressed by the Kyoto school and in particular from Nishida

Kitaro. Nishida has been considered the more influential contemporary Japanese thinker who manifests striking similarities with European philosophers. Core concepts of Nishida will be paralleled with Merleau-Ponty and William James' thought in the next section of this chapter. The principles that denote the *Butoh-body* and inform the current research, are primarily related to the relationship of the body with its environment. This bond (*Butoh* dancer's body and environment and hopefully audience's body and environment) is named *Butoh-tai*.

Kasai explains it clearly below:

There are four basic categories of the mind body set concerning movements:

- 1) The subject starts movements
- 2) The environment and/or internal mechanisms start the person's movements
- 3) Both the subject and the environment/internal mechanisms co-operate and start movements
- 4) The self and environment and the movements are not separated.

(Kasai 2000, p. 357)

According to Kasai, the fourth category (*Basho*) is transcending the dichotomized relationship of the subject and object built upon an idea of human power over the environment that governs westernized societies. Hence, *Basho* is a particular way of experiencing *Butoh-tai*: being within an ever-changing context, in synergy with the environment, constituting a circuit. *Butoh-tai* is then analyzed in its very principles that cover different strands of this relationship. From those principles (that circumscribe the same attitude), I am placing the concept of *Basho*, which was

coined by Nishida on 1979, (Kasai 2000, p. 5) at the core of my research. *Basho* has informed the research with regards of its research outcome and has therefore shaped its research design; the concept of *Basho* shapes the research design of the performative installations that form this project.

Kasai, in the same paper, mentions that Dr Rolf Elberfeld, a German philosopher with specialization in Phenomenology, Sinology and the History of Religion, enumerated a series of keywords of *Butoh* (Ibid). All those Japanese terms are interlinked with each other and they somehow denote different layers of a unique concept incorporated in *Butoh*. In my research in particular, the following ones are being addressed:

- 1) I have been examining *Basho* (the place) in *Seabed*; body and environment operate in synergy in a mutual ongoing relationship.
- 2) *Life-death*, or the constant flow of energy through transitional states is addressed in *Waste-is-land*.
- 3) *Pure experience*, Nishida's most fundamental way of experience is the research focus of *Sky-field*.

### **1.5 Conceptual contextualization of the research: connecting *Butoh* to European philosophical concepts**

In this section, I will locate *Butoh* concepts of interrelation among human and non-human entities within a spectrum of mostly European philosophic ideas that are challenging the dualistic way of perceiving reality as separate identities. Jonathan Roffe, in his essay upon the interiority and exteriority in Deleuze, states that "human subjectivity as a produced interiority undergoes changes according to its social

milieu, its relations, its specific encounters, and so forth.” (Parr 2010, p.98) He highlights that, for Deleuze there is not such a thing as separated entities (exteriority and interiority) and this becomes clearer when Deleuze comments that “for Hume there is no natural interiority (conscious willing, for example) involved in human subjectivity. Rather, the subject is formed by pre-subjective parts, which are held together by a network of relations.” (Parr 2010, p.97) Roffe explains that for Deleuze, the more power a thing has, or the greater is the power of existence, the greater number of ways in which it can be affected. Deleuze’s point of view upon an intrinsic bond between affect and power is challenging an anthropocentric point of view that might envision humans at the center of a universe existing only to satisfy their needs. On the contrary, what is here being pointed out is the receptivity of the body and its availability to be shaped by its context: this constitutes the heart of my approach within this project.

When Deleuze refers to the mixing of bodies, there is an interesting resemblance to the *Butoh-tai* concept as he is trying to analyze the modalities of collision between bodies. He describes that: “sometimes this mixing alters one of the bodies (as when the food is altered and then being assimilated, or when a poison destroys a body’s vital parts); sometimes it alters both and produces a composite relation of parts that dominates the relation of both components (as when chyle and lymph mix to form the blood, which is of a different nature from its components); and sometimes it preserves the relation of parts among them both, in which case the two bodies form part of a whole.” (Parr 2010, p.36) Adopting a point of view that envisions entities as open to alteration and modification based on their context, highlights fluidity in time and space components as we are invited to take them into account as acting forces.

Also, in the online documentary “West and East, Cultural Differences” (Lee, Myung-jin, Michael, 2009 quoted by Caldwell 2017, p.11), it is mentioned that westerners typically see space as something empty wherein the objects exist independently from their surroundings; whereas for Japanese culture the space is filled with energy known as *Ki*. According to this documentary, an object is made from *Ki* and exists inside *Ki*, therefore objects are related through *Ki*. This fundamentally different way of spatial perception is evident in the European philosophers’, starting from ancient Greek philosophers “ideation of ‘being’ instead of ‘arising from conditional causation’ in the eastern.” (Lee, Myung-jin, Michael, 2009 17:02 min) Here, ‘being’ is linked to stationary objects with an individual nature while their motivation for action towards their surroundings reside within their identity. On the contrary, ‘arising’ is related to a context-based net of relationship that focuses into actions. Here actions are seen as relations that interlink entities rather than considering that separate entities’ and their properties are existing a priori. Caldwell reports that according to the above-mentioned documentary, this fundamental difference of perceiving reality is noticed also in language structure: “In Western languages, nouns are favored, leading to more exact descriptions of individual objects. In contrast to this, Eastern languages favor verbs, and so are more interested in how objects act and interact [...] this relational aspect can also be seen in the becomings of *butoh* [sic].”(Ibid) I am referring to the verb-language of *Butoh-fu* (more extensively in chapter 3, focal points of discussion) analyzing how Thomas Eliott’s poem *Wasteland* (1922) which provided inspiration of *Waste-is-land* (encounter 2) relates to this idea.

In “West and East, Cultural Differences” (2009) is commented that this way of perceiving the world is noticeable when viewing an image; In the example illustrated of exposing the image of an animal in the middle of a landscape, an American



tendentially focuses on the object whereas Asians are looking at its background with an eye movement that is moving back and forth. In other words, in west an object is perceived to have inherent properties while in east the situation around the object decides its properties. This notion of interactivity is well represented visually in Japanese gardens and *Butoh* as they both stem from Zen Buddhism worldview. “Japanese gardens also follow the principles of perspective of Japanese landscape painting, which feature a close-up plane, an intermediate plane, and a distant plane. The empty space between the different planes has a great importance, and is filled with water, moss, or sand. The garden designers used various optical tricks to give the garden the illusion of being larger than it really is, by borrowing of scenery: ‘*shakkei*’.” (Klecka 2011, p.20) A Japanese garden architect is deploying the power of the context as a connecting force in order to direct the meaning perceived by the senses: to really appreciate a garden, one should view it within its context and approach it as a conceptual art piece.

Similarly, Kasai notes that “in Butoh dance, not the dancer as subject is dancing, the place itself is dancing and the dancer will be created by the place in which he is dancing.” (Kasai 2000, p. 358) Nishida’s notion of *Basho* as *locus*, place, is not referring only to its spatial characteristics as such. *Basho* is a field of enveloping forces, where time is infinitely dynamic and different strands of consciousness coexist. Nishida’s *Basho* lays in contrast to Plato’s *Chora* (χώρα), which is defined as the place where the sensible comes into a form or the intelligible form. John Krummel, in his essay *Chora in Heidegger and Nishida* (2016), mentions that “In Plato’s text, *Chora*, is said to be the receptacle and recipient onto which the ideas, the intelligible paradigms of reality, are in-formed or in-scribed, stamped to make their particular copies.” (52 a-d quoted by Krummel 2016, p.491) He explains that

“such images of being need *Chora* as their place of becoming and perishing. That is to say that the *form*-ation of *genesis* by the *idea* necessitates a place.” (Ibid, p. 492) We might therefore assume, that Plato’s idea for *Chora* incorporates a latent conflict between the ideal and the real, whereas on the other hand, Japanese thought would promote a monistic approach of the reality, melding the perceived with the imperceptible that is immanence. Krummel in his later essay entitled *On the nothing: Heidegger and Nishida*, states that

If Western metaphysics since Plato has been oriented around the dichotomization between form and matter or thought and reality, one might say that much of the Japanese intellectual tradition has focused upon the relationship between nothingness (*mu*) understood as formlessness (*mukei*) and the realm of beings (*yu*) understood as things with form (*keiso, katachi*) [...] Nishida repeats the contrast between the West that takes being as the ground of reality qua form and the East that takes the nothing as the ground of reality qua formlessness. (Krummel 2018, p.241)

For Nishida, *Chora* represents only the matter, whereas he describes *Basho* as the field of consciousness wherein our attention falls into the context that generates the subject in a reciprocal on-going relationship.

According to Krummel in Heidegger we find some similarities with Nishida’s thinking of nothing (ness). “If Nishida is known as the thinker of the nothing, Heidegger is known as the thinker of being par excellence.” (Krummel 2018, p.251) Heidegger asks “whether being as ground is the absence of ground or a non-ground” (Ibid, p.253) whereas “Nishida’s absolute nothing encompasses both negativity and

positivity, negation and affirmation, non-being and being, destruction and creation while being irreducible to either pole.” (Ibid, p.250) Krummel argues that there is some affinity between Nishida’s *Basho* (place) where everything unfolds and coexists as we find ourselves within it and Heidegger’s Da-sein: “Dasein (being (t) here) names this site or scene wherein or whereby we find ourselves always already as an opening for the unfolding of being.” (Ibid, p.251) He points out that for both thinkers, “The nothing is an originary un/ground of beings, an opening from which subject and object are derived.” (Ibid, 257) Besides, *Basho* could be related also to Heidegger’s topology (it refers to the concept of place) that I am going to discuss more extensively in the second chapter in correlation to *Seabed’s* conceptual grounding.

This discussion might be expanded with the concept of body as *locus* of our experience described as such by Merleau-Ponty. Hence, I will introduce elements of his thought in order to shed light to the philosophical discourse that *Basho* marks. According to him, experience is unfolding within the body which contains different strata in its interrelation with the world. Therefore, “the body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but rather to a work of art.” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, p. 150) Moreover, Philip Zarrilli, borrows Merleau-Ponty’s term “chiasmatic” that concerns the interconnectedness of the body perception with its surroundings in order to refer to the actor’s body as the “chiasmatic body”: “The notion that the experience of the lived body may best be described as “chiasm”-braiding, inter-twinning, or crisscrossing- originated with Merleau-Ponty’s early description of the intertwining that characterizes the body’s fundamental relationship to the world.” (Zarrilli 2007, p. 59) This approach, would envision the body as a central unit or channel throughout which our experience of the world occurs and whereby it is stored. This quality

ascribed to the body, would result to shaping the present moment as well and is here seen as an argumentation about my research design within the project.

In addition, Merleau-Ponty, in his essay *Eye and Mind* refers to the roundish quality of the experience, in what the space has actually an embracing quality. This statement reconnects our way of perceiving the world with *Basho*, where the subject finds itself within the realm of life:

Space is not what it was in the Dioptrics, a network or relations between objects such as would be seen by a third party, witnessing my vision or by a geometer looking over it and reconstructing it from outside. It is rather a space reckoned starting from me as the null point of spatiality...I do not see it according to its exterior envelope; I live it from inside; I am immersed in it. After all, the world is around me, not in front of me. (Ponty 1961, p.12)

I reflect upon Merleau-Ponty's thinking in relation to the creation process by questioning: if the space is around me, why should an artwork arrive frontally to the spectator? If I engage with an artwork physically then why the duration of this interaction is not considered in so far as my existence would unfold within time?

Also, as Marratto states: "Merleau-Ponty says: 'In learning that my body is a *perceiving thing* that is able to be stimulated—it and not just my *consciousness*—I prepared myself for understanding that there are other 'animalia' and possibly other men.'" (S, 168/ 274 quoted in Marratto 2012, p. 142) Furthermore, Marratto asserts that "the unity of one's body is accomplished in the field of what Merleau-Ponty calls 'intercorporeity' he and I are like organs of one single 'intercorporeity.'" (S, 168/ 274 quoted in Marratto 2012, p. 144) Merleau-Ponty acknowledges and highlights the

importance of the context in what forms reality. He distinguishes ‘intercorporeity’ that I am here comparing to *Basho*, from ‘intersubjectivity’ since it occurs in a pre-subjective level of consciousness. To this respect, this point of view is relevant to my research in what Merleau-Ponty is reflecting upon the consciousness of the bodily self and its awareness of being the conduit of what occurs beyond the self. Here, I am pointing out the striking similarity between those concepts. I am therefore exploring whether *Butoh* as an articulated embodied system of knowledge may function as the ‘ladder’ that brings me nearer to ‘intercorporeity’ or *Basho*—which corresponds to the specific modality of the *Butoh-tai*.

Perceived in its entirety, this multi-layered encounter between the body and its environment is a *field of action* and according to Boehme it constitutes an *Atmosphere*. (Boehme, 1993) Boehme’s *Theory of atmospheres* is basically an aesthetic theory that reveals the theatrical of the event-society by paying attention to the multiplicity of essentially sensory factors that influence what we might call informally a mood in our everydayness. The central subject of an Atmosphere for Boehme is the living person’s experience of space and place (Boehme 1993, p.113). My art practice is crafting sensorial stimuli and aims to guide audience’s experience. Boehme’s approach points out the ephemeral arts’ humanistic approach on life. In this respect, his ideas are relevant to my research upon the lived experience as phenomenon.

### **1.6 *Butoh*: operating as a manual for *Basho* in the current project**

*Butoh* perceives the body in its relationship with its ever-changing environment. Akira Kasai states that one of the methods used in his workshops is “...practicing physical awareness, in things such as how the body changes when you are on the streets of

the city. It is a process of renewing awareness of sensibilities related to the body.” (Kasai, 2013) Kasai’s physical awareness experimentation, could find its parallel to Guy Debord’s technique of aimless wandering in the urban space, also known as *Dérive*: “*Dérives* (drifts) involve playful-constructive behaviour and awareness of psychogeographical effects.” (Debord, 1956 quoted and translated by Knabb, 1958) This type of strategies within the field of performance and interventions are employed as a spatial practice, a method for subverting normative notions of dwelling and territory while inviting us to reconsider the political and aesthetic function of different art forms and everyday practices.

Similarly, *Butoh* draws from the body’s vulnerability to the ever-changing factors that living experience offers. For this reason, when Fraleigh refers to the transformation as the effect of a *Butoh* performance, she is actually suggesting that this experience is pre-cognitive and cannot be described by words: “As in ritual, the dancer and the audience transform through the experience of the event...these experiences are presented as ‘metamorphic explorations’ because they pass from one state to another in transformational modes characteristic of *Butoh*.” (Fraleigh & Nakamura 2006, p.101) *Butoh* is a metamorphic dance because 1) the very nature of *Butoh* is that of a somatic study instead of being a contemplative event: this triggers the audience’s somatic immediate response and engagement 2) *Butoh*’s subject of somatic enquiry is transformation: *Butoh-fu* is a chain of changing states and the dancers are called to embody their transition points as part of their dance.

The process of transformation is explained technically by Iwana as follows: “When more than one inner element has been drawn out, transition from one element (e.g. female sexuality in a male dancer) to another (e.g. an animal in him) it is ‘transformation’...it is the mechanism of becoming that enables the process of

actualizing a hidden inner element and one actualizing element transforming into another.” (Iwana 2011, p.11) Iwana’s practice, as I have experienced it in firsthand during the intensive seminar attended on June 2018, is a well-designed process that brings the performers to a state of opening to their inner landscape (*nikutai*). There is a call for the necessity to develop one’s individual motivation and inner mechanism. Iwana’s approach is highly individual-oriented, and he would not consider a common or prescribed pathway to achieve the state of transformation. For him, experience is always related to a specific subject as well as the creation process of it.

Also, according to Iwana’s overview of *Butoh* physical elements:

...the body as a living entity contains external nature within it. Further it has natural rhythm and speed of a material entity...To remind people that their bodies have forgotten this rhythm and speed I like to tightly crumple a plastic bag in my hands and place it on the floor. Regardless of its will, the bag inevitably interacts with surrounding air or space and demonstrates spontaneous perfect movements...The temporal and spatial aspects seen in this example necessarily exist in a human body. (Iwana 2011, p. 10)

Ideally, the body of the *Butoh* performer should not be the object of the gaze of the audience, but instead, the dancing body opens up a site of images offered to the spectator’s interpretation. The body becomes a site:

...another characteristic is the existence of inner nature, inner landscape or *nikutai*...From its birth, the body perpetually takes in external time and space, becoming fully impregnated with inner time and space...That the body embraces both inner and external nature within leads to the new conclusive

fact that the time and space are produced by the body as if breathed out.  
(Iwana 2011, p. 10)

The bond between the body and its external environment is one of Merleau-Ponty's subjects of discussion as well: "Bodily space can be distinguished from external space and envelop its parts instead of spreading them out." (PhP, 101/117 quoted in Marratto, 2012, p.149) There appears to be a significant difference between Iwana's statement that the body is actually co-forming the time-space because of its quality of being impregnated with Merleau-Ponty's point of view that the body can be absent from the external space. Presumably, Merleau-Ponty and Iwana refer to different levels of experience. It is noticeable that when Merleau-Ponty is bringing the body at his focus, he preserves an anthropocentric point of view that sees the body as subject; being it a subject interconnected with its surroundings through intercorporeity, it still constitutes the lens of the experience. On the contrary, Iwana is attempting to eliminate the body as individual working towards the erasure of the personhood: he rather points out the ecological compresence of the body and time-space leading it to a level of existence that equates human and non-human beings.

My practice aims to reveal the inner time of the spectator and seeks its organic connection with the spatial-temporal circumstances that form the so-called external present time. I am therefore questioning whether the use of selected morphological and conceptual elements of *Butoh* will further enrich the immersivity of participants in the field of time-based art. What happens if the habitual way of experiencing the world within a western anthropocentric point of view is challenged? Benjamin, in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility* suggests that perception and existence are interlinked and occur into a specific historical frame:



During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The way human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well.

(Benjamin 1988, p. 219)

The above statement points out why my research focus upon perception is here considered in relation to its cultural and historical specific context. Ascribing importance to the perception and modalities of engagement of the audience (seen also as an indicator of the historical circumstances as argued by Benjamin) is justifying the use of performative installation in the current project; performative installation is a medium that presupposes the human presence in its actualization therefore offers a pool of relevant data to the research. The *body of the relationship*—which is the subject under inquiry here—requires physical entities in order to emerge. Our era is characterized as trans-human and post-human: we coexist with digital devices and technology is part of our ordinary flow of life. Technology is part of our society: our bodies live in symbiosis with technological more than with natural processes in highly industrialized urban landscapes. Technology is a powerful tool used by humans without engaging with them through a physical interrelation. Moreover, technology operates through impersonal schemes of communication.

The focal point of posthumanism consists not as such in an a-critical acceptance of the technological promises- like there is for transhumanism-

but in a total contamination and hybridization of human beings with other living beings and machines [...] As with ecologism, posthumanism, in order to obtain total contamination and man's openness to otherness, proposes the elimination and fluidification of boundaries, thus even denying man's identity, and with it, the very possibility of openness. (Valera 2014, p.481)

Thus, the body, in our post-human society, is not only regulated by social norms but it has also lost its physicality and individuality as basic vehicle of communication. This contrast is more obvious, if compared to what Iwana describes as the major characteristics of the body in *Butoh*:

- 1) It contains both physiological and emotional entities while retaining an individual character.
- 2) It is a repository for nature.
- 3) It embraces the entirety of time lived from birth.
- 4) It encapsulates all elements of the soul, even intuition or spirituality.

(Iwana 2011, p. 8)

Attaining the *Butoh-body* is not an immediate action but requires long-term cultivation and connection with nature as the font of the organic in life. In this respect, Sandra Reeve's (2011) notion of "ecological body" might be worth to be mentioned as a parallel conceptual reference to the *Butoh-body*. Reeve in her book *Nine ways of seeing a body*, suggests that "body and environment [...] co-create each other through mutual influence and interactional shaping [...] The ecological body is situated in movement itself and as a system dancing within systems, rather

than as an isolated unit.” (Reeve 2011, p.18) In the current research, I am aiming to explore alternative states of being and develop an amalgam- art form that points to the viewers’ spatial and temporal awareness by crafting its environment.

Michael Hornblow is offering an overview of the basic influences that shaped Hijikata’s formulation of the *Butoh body* as follows:

The themes of sexual metamorphosis and native rural experience that appear in Hijikata’s *Butoh*, stem from a kind of primordial yearning that rejects western modernism, while at the same time drawing on avant-garde French literature and radical philosophy. Principal writers that inspired him were Lautreamont, Artaud, Genet and Sade. Hijikata’s rebellion was of seeking to re-inhabit and reconstruct the body, a body denied and controlled by the rationalism and emerging consumerism of post-war Japan. (Hornblow 2006, p. 29)

He furthermore quotes Tanaka referring to Hijikata: “As Tanaka Min remarks, ‘He was always angry about how our bodies are controlled historically.’ (Tanaka 1985, p. 146 quoted by Hornblow 2006, p.33) This also relates to Hijikata’s interest of Artaud’s “Theatre of cruelty” and the Deleuzian concept of the Body without organs (BwO). Artaud was seeking a different way of engaging with the body in particular through the use of sensorial effects and vocalisms. Hijikata and Artaud were both operating toward the freedom of the body from social behavioral restraints. Correspondingly, in BwO, Deleuze refers to a revolutionary way of interconnectivity between humans that are now seen as biological entities. BwO is a concept that transcends the deterministic way of functionalism and goes beyond and against

hierarchical modalities of everyday life structures triggering a discussion upon politics and societal patterns.

Waychoff comments that: “In Butoh, personal bodily memories break through the surface and the dancer moves in the liminal space between the past and the present, the self and the community.” (Waychoff 2009, p. 39) Therefore, *Butoh* marks a research field that goes beyond the artistic domain if perceived as an activity detached to the reality. *Butoh* is acting as a response to its context. In addition, in analogy to Kaprow’s “Essays on blurring of art and life” (2013) viewpoints, Hijikata and Ohno were also trying to expand the medium of dance. (Waychoff, 2009) Regarding Dind, Hijikata’s research was not focussed on ‘dance as a vessel’ but he was looking for the “danced body” as a “primal body, genuinely human and beyond expression.” (Dind 2016, p.49) Dind adds that Hijikata wanted to explore the practical dimension in a man’s life, his animal instincts, and his primal nature.” (Dind 2016, p.60) This type of above-mentioned inquiries which go beyond the fixed boundaries of an art medium and overcomes the confines of its historical period could potentially be applied to different artistic fields. This happens because it constitutes a mechanism of retrieval and recovery of the body-archaeology while being detached from representation and context. The research inherent to *Butoh* is not referring to a Japanese body but seeks to unveil the nature of all bodies and for this reason it constitutes a precious tool for the current project.

Hijikata’s declaration “I have nothing to show you but my own body.” (Reported by Mikami, 2002 quoted by Dind 2016, p. 61), denotes the claim to go deep into our appearance and dig out the “dance already immanent in the dancer’s body.” (Iwana 2011, p. 34) Iwana notes that what has made *Butoh* so significant has not been only its rebel-like nature but the fact that “it has also demanded a philosophical uprooting

which categorically refutes all modes of ready-made culture.” (Iwana 2011, p. 37) In the same historical period (early 60s), “the anti-commercial, sober enactments of the everyday experience in Fluxus gave way to the activist projects.” (Warr 2000, p. 22) Warr notes, that according to M. Feher, the vision of those artistic movements has highlighted the salience of embodiment: “the body is not a site of resistance to a power which exists outside it; within the body there is a constant tension between mechanism of power and techniques of resistance.” (Ibid) Those approaches upon the importance of the body as a site of resistance and discovery, however reaching us from different artistic disciplines are converging to each other. The difference between visual and drama-based areas perspective is that the latter operates with methods that address specifically and methodically the body under the form of a training. This fact, explains also my choice for opting to an interdisciplinary profile in the research as I am exploring whether visual arts in large, could be enriched from a more systematic approach upon body’s perception.

### **1.7 Immersion within my research**

Positing that "nature is correct," Brice Marden advises that when "we look at nature, we understand what is real in the world. But to make valid art around this experience required a remove from nature's form to a language of purely artistic idiom.” (Marden, 2017) Marden creates paintings inspired from natural phenomena, in the same way that I am approaching nature as the force or togetherness of phenomena that lead my experience and therefore artistic practice. Through my practice, I am not trying to recreate but to evoke a certain sense of interconnectivity that is based to

my experience in firsthand. For example, the effect of the wind in Ireland was an insight that gave birth to a series of research iterations and led me to the *Butoh-body* as such. I am therefore experimenting with the enabling conditions that will hopefully evoke the *Butoh-body* experience to the perceiver. I am doing this through a series of iterations, adopting different mediums. In particular, during my second performative installation *Waste-is-land*, participants were asked to manipulate organic material and perform a goal-oriented action with them. Here, the attention was given mainly to the technologies of the action itself as the participants were faced with the following questions: how do I move within space? How much time am I taking to do that? How do I act with the material? How do I interact with the others? Similarly, in *Sky-field*— third performative installation—people were asked to perform again a simple action while being surrounded by a video projection that obstructs their vision. Their bodily self was called into action while engaging with the given material among other bodies in action.

I perceive immersion in my practice-based research as a state of presence closely related to Nishida's concept of 'Acting-intuition.' (Nishida, 1987) A clarifying example is given by Fung below as he compares Nishida's concept of "Acting intuition" with the notion of *poiesis* and *praxis* in Aristotle. This particular example is pertinent to my practice of handling the raw material and may shed light in the ways that I am perceiving the live art action through the lens of *Butoh-body*. As Fung states in his article "Dancing body of Nishida Kitaro":

Aristotle distinguishes *poiesis* and *praxis* according to their respective end in the Nichomachean Ethics Book VI. He considers *poiesis* as an action directed teleologically to the production of objects, while *praxis* is an action that has its

end in itself. In other words, *poiesis* is the action on outer thing and *praxis* the action in us...Nishida tried to understand poiesis and praxis in a tightly dialectical fusion, so that it would not be possible to think the one without the other...That is why Nishida claims that when the maker makes things, the thing made also makes the maker. (Fung 2012, p. 3)

This is a representative approach of the eastern philosophical tradition that overcomes dualism and moves toward a “merged reality” between the subject and the object. Nishida, very often, “translates his philosophical concepts into the Western way of thinking.” (Kozyra 2007, p.71) Kozyra explains that Nishida has based his whole thinking upon “Acting-intuition” to James’s notion of “Pure experience.” (Ibid) This unmediated experience of subject-object, is also encountered in the *Butoh-body* notion, defined by Kasai’s (2000, p.5) article *A note on Butoh-body*. In particular, this becomes apparent when he refers to the term *Basho*, stating that “in Butoh dance, not the dancer as subject is dancing, the place itself is dancing and the dancer will be created by the place in which he is dancing.” (Kasai 2000, p. 5) In order to achieve this kind of connection to the environment, a different way of perception and body awareness has to be activated.

With respect to immersion, I would like to introduce some basic concepts of Nishida’s thought in order to clarify and ground this salient aspect of my research. In doing so, I will refer to resonating thoughts of Merleau-Ponty and James aiming to give a broader theoretical perspective to my inquiry. Initially, it is important to mention that Nishida’s philosophy was related to Zen tradition and that he has always been seeking to translate “Zen experience into the language of the philosophy itself.” (Kozyra, 2007, p.73) Agnieszka Kozyra, in her article “Nishida Kitaro’s Logic of Absolutely Contradictory Self-Identity and the Problem of Orthodoxy

in the Zen Tradition”, explains that by “Zen orthodoxy” she means “a theoretical framework that is used during verification of Zen Enlightenment.” (Ibid, p.69) In this article, Kozyra notes that “statements of Zen are scattered through Nishida’s writing” and that he perceived his philosophy in relation with ‘Kenshō’ (Enlightenment). (Ibid) According to her, Nishida often emphasizes that in order to grasp ‘Kenshō’ or the Enlightenment as seeing one’s nature, one must grasp fully the logic of paradox. Here, the paradox is strictly related to his concept of the absolutely contradictory self-identity, referring to the given ambiguity of our being as being both the object and subject of cognition. (Ibid)

Relevant to the absolute contradictory self is Merleau-Ponty’s idea of the ‘chiasmic’ self which refers to our modality of being both acted by the world (flesh or *Basho*) as we are acting upon the world. Merleau-Ponty’s statement: “the world is made of the same stuff as the body” is encouraging a non-anthropocentric approach towards our experience. (Merleau-Ponty 1964, p. 162 quoted by Kazashi 2011, p. 92) Similarly, Kruegel notes that “the starting point of James thought is a deeply empirical concern. In his consideration of concrete experience, he is pointing to a world as experienced by an embodied, embedded and acting agent.” (Kruegel 2006, p. 2) Kruegel comments that “mirroring a basic Zen Buddhist presupposition that Nishida will later utilize for his own ends, James argued that conceptual analysis would never provide an exhaustive account of human experience in its phenomenal richness.” (Ibid, p.3) However, it should be clarified that his insistence to ‘give up logic’, was merely referring to the modalities with whom philosophers habitually relate to the world: James believed that concepts are characterizing us more than they characterize the thing (Ibid). In comparison, Nishida’s “Acting-intuition’ was referring to an experiential mode of non-dual engagement with the world.” (Ibid, p.6) Both James and Nishida



have been anticipating some of the themes of Merleau-Ponty's work as they "stress the basic ambiguity of the subject-body as the malleable locus of our embodied experience." (Ibid, p.8) The above-mentioned concepts stress out upon our experience, placing the body's mode of relating with the world at their core. This is also the focus of my research which will use handling materials as a tool in reaching participants' immersivity.

Nishida's term "Acting-intuition" is shedding light to the different qualities arising from our intertwinement with the world. When he speaks about 'Acting-intuition' referring to the way that we approach objects in our everydayness, Nishida states that "in its interaction with things, our body itself is becoming a thing in-the-world...Through body and tool, self and environment are thus interconnected." (Fung 2012, p.4) Fung condenses this idea by saying that "in 'Acting-intuition', the body, the self and the tool are inseparable." (Ibid, p.5) In addition, Kruegel (2008) in his latter paper "Ethical education as bodily training: Kitaro Nishida's moral phenomenology of 'Acting-intuition", asserts that for Nishida, "Acting-intuition" is the way that we realize 'Pure experience' in 'embedded praxis." (Kruegel 2008, p. 322) So, in this regard, we might assume that pure experience which for Nishida is the "most refined type of experience" and also related to 'Kenshō' (Nishida, 1990 quoted by Kruegel, 2008, p. 319) resonates with James's direct experience. In this project, I define this state of presence where we sense no distance between the perceived and the perceiver as immersion and its quality as immersivity.

This bodily knowing brings Nishida closer to the idea of artist-philosopher that has been discussed by A. Bohler, A. Loughnane and G. Parkes to a letter correspondence that was published within the frame of Performance philosophy. According to this discussion, artist-philosophers emerging from the Asian traditions,

have learned to practice philosophy as a way of life that involves their corporeal being; so, in a way they do perform philosophy. In particular, Boehler refers to “Ancient China’s prerequisite for becoming a philosopher as a self-cultivation through the ‘Six Arts’: ritual performance, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, mathematics and playing of music...to do philosophy was thus to perform, it required a considerable physical skill to develop which requires prolonged practice.” (Bohler 2015, p.136) The accent here falls to the embodied knowledge emerging when an action that requires psycho-physical engagement occurs.

Parkes adds that for Nishida, “the materials that surround the performers are not incidental to their bodies...we see an eye at the tip of the artist’s brush or the sculptor’s chisel.” (Nishida 1973, p.156 quoted by Parkes, 2015, p.144) He comments that Nishida believes that ‘Acting-intuition’ is a state of being activated when artists are creating their artwork and “in such a context, both artist and his work become one inseparable act.” (Nishida, 1973, p. 21 quoted by Parkes 2015, p.155) Besides, Parkes explains that Nishida does not consider the performer’s action to be introducing expression into a non-expressive world: the historical world for him is a creative process as well within which our body is creative and poetic. The term poetic is used here in the Aristotelian way of *poesis* as acting, where doing means co-forming, shaping the world: Nishida, considers that the “historical world is a creative world.” (Nishida 1998, p. 48) Summing up what arises from the discussion around the term immersion, the focus is placed upon the context that shapes our experience in a reciprocal way as we affect it with our actions. Therefore, the performative installations constitute a chain of experimentations which, in order to explore Acting-intuition, are pointing at the senses of the perceiver that becomes a co-creator. Those hybrid forms of practice are motivated from the urge to develop

and discover alternative ways of body dwelling within its environment which I identify in immersion.

### **1.8 Emerging Research questions, Research positionality and Ethical issues:**

Emerging from my reading and practice to date, I have identified the following research questions:

- 1) How can the *Butoh-body* notion be used in order to enhance immersive experience within Performative installation practice?
- 2) How does the deployment of different mediums and engagement strategies in order to reach immersivity shape this research?
- 3) How shall I approach and analyse audience's feedback in an effective way?

My practice investigates links between the subject and the object, and I refer to this bond as the *body of the relationship*. I focus upon the philosophical and existential readings of *Being* as they emerge through the notion of *Butoh-body*. My research aims to support new understandings in art making with a focus in immersive performative installation practices.

The research design is not critically applying *Butoh* as a notational choreographic method, as a training praxis or as a stagecraft. Instead, the research design choices were dictated by a combination of artistic and curatorial practice with a number of factors that included *Butoh-body* conceptual framework in terms of philosophical

principles and formal questions (based on embodied experience from workshops and readings) together with participants' feedback. We might argue that in a way the research constitutes an aesthetic experiment upon immersivity, placing ecology of practice at its heart. As a consequence, designing participants' experience lays at its core and participants' feedback had constituted the means with which to test it (experience) out. However, it would be significant to point out that participants' feedback (all available in the appendix) was not the only source that guided the research decisions: research design was in constant evolution as the research was carried out and took into consideration the above-mentioned factors.

Ethical approval of the research has been granted by the Research Ethics Filter Committee for UoA33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies. The approval was sought for the performative installations in two different stages. Ethical forms are attached in the index as follows: RG3 (1) was granted for *Seabed* and RG3 (2) for *Waste-is-land* and *Sky-field 1&2*.

*Seabed* aimed to activate the audience's sensorial experience/ participation without causing any harm or distress. Subject to a consent form being signed, experiential feedback was gathered using:

- Filming before, during or after the activity.
- By reflective writing about their experience
- To produce a symbolic (non-verbal) feedback about their experience.

Risk assessment of the room in order to assure the health and safety of participants has been conducted and the levels of risk were identified as minimal. The recruitment occurred with open invitation through social media, the maximum desired number of participants was 30 and the actual uptake was 23 with 96% completion rate.

The target group was that of people with background in the arts. I sought to include subjects with a close association to the fine arts as well as individuals with no prior experience. Participants were recruited from the local arts community, and from the staff and students of the School of Arts and Humanities.

Similar methodologies were used in *Waste-is-land* and *Sky-field 1&2*. The inclusion and exclusion criteria embraced subjects with a close association to the fine arts as well as individuals with no prior experience (specialist and non-specialist audiences so that reactions can be compared using qualitative methods). In *Waste-is-land* a total number of 20 participants and was conducted in small groups that varied from 2 to 6 participants. The completion rate was 100%. In *Sky-field 1*, the estimated number of participants was 30 persons. In that case, no written questionnaires were collected but a filmed guided discussion took place instead. In *Sky-field 2* 18 persons took part and the completion rate was 95%.

All Ethical approval forms can be found in the Appendix in the following order a. acceptance and b. application for Ethical approval.

## Chapter 2

### ***Seabed*, performative installation**

The literature review conducted during the first year of the current practice-based research, has contributed to the articulation and realization of *Seabed*. In addition, this performative installation drew partially from the elaboration of the first-hand experience gained at the intensive *Butoh* seminar held by Atsushi Takenouchi October 2017. This chapter will focus on my methodology illustrating the whole process of creation: I will begin by introducing selected elements of *Butoh* and their philosophical background, and explaining how these elements have shaped the formal, compositional and conceptual aspects of *Seabed*. I will also refer to my aims and focal areas of the project, and will link these to a broader philosophical as well as artistic debate. Finally, I will discuss selected practitioners that I perceive as resonating with my practice.

### **2.1 Creation process of an experiential-based installation**

#### **2.1.1 “Mother Sea” *Butoh-fu***

“Mother sea” was the first guided practice (*Butoh-fu*) that Takenouchi introduced during the seminar. Since 2016, Atsushi offers a six-month intensive *Butoh* residency at Palaia, Tuscany. This residency is articulated in six 10 days’ intensive seminars taking place respectively each month. The rest of the in-between time, participants are staying in this rural landscape having at their disposal a studio to rehearse on

their own. My attendance occurred at the first taught slot of the *Butoh* residency 2017/2018. During the 10 days of the seminar we have been starting our daily practice with “Mother Sea” *Butoh-fu* which had a grounding and warming effect on me both physically and emotionally. The body position that we were encouraged to assume was lying on the floor and keeping our knees bent. This posture allowed our back to spread over the pavement completely, while the soles of our feet were pressing the ground. This is an elemental body posture that resembles the fetal position if looked under a 90-angle perspective.

Subsequently, activated by the pressure of the feet to the ground, the body was invited to raise slightly while reaching in different directions and intensities. The movement was soft and manifested a periodicity similar to waves in the sea. The imagery given by Atsushi was that our breath derives from the undulation and cyclic movement of the sea. This was an invitation to perceive our breath as organically interconnected with an element that is typically characterized by its fluidity: water. I have been observing the universality of the instructions: water’s fluidity is a phenomenon with which almost everybody could connect with. At the same time, because it has being performed by the particularity of each body this movement patterned had preserved its expressive potential. Takenouchi added that the sea is our “mother” since we come from the water as human species.

My experience of “Mother sea” was not merely that of a physical exercise that activated the spine and the internal coordination of the body in terms of weight, joints, dynamic flow and muscles; this *Butoh-fu* gradually connected my body to the sensation of being part of something bigger, somehow infinite. Furthermore, the visual imagery addressed a psychosomatic level of engagement with the action and gave me access to my body memories of floating and diving in the sea. I reckon that

the way Takenouchi transferred the *Butoh-fu* to us was determining to its effectiveness. He would not describe the posture and position we were invited to assume stressing to its technical aspects but would create a dramaturgy behind this simple sequence of movements. As a result, my body travelled through different stages/ visual imageries which would evoke *atmospheres* (Boehme, 1993) or situations where I was imaginarily placed.

Heidrun Panhofer (2017) in her essay “Body memory and its recuperation through movement” comments that “the idea of a body that feels, a body that knows and remember, is nothing new.” (Panhofer 2017, p.115) She discusses that important challenges in neuroscience, philosophy and cognitive linguistics are challenging the Cartesian reading of body-mind dualism. Panhofer quotes Damasio’s (1994) definition of emotions as “somatic markers.” (Damasio 1994, pp. 173-5 quoted by Panhofer 2017, p.116) She mentions that for Damasio, emotions are representatives of corporal states, and “he considers the body as an important container of all past and present moments.” (Ibid) In addition, according to Panhofer, “Chodrow (1994) points out how movement can activate both conscious and unconscious process [...] movement can open us to our inner worlds and unconscious psyche.” (Ibid, p. 123) This body’s potentiality to act as an open gate of our past, has been explored in “Mother sea”.

In order to give a clearer impression of Atsushi’s delivery of “Mother sea”, I will offer the verbalization of the *Butoh-fu* accompanied by what occurred to the body physically:

- 1) Our breath is “Mother sea’s” breath: breath awareness and guidance of placing the quality of rotary movement of the tides to our breath



- 2) We are floating upon “Mother sea” surface: the body raises from the ground, we are invited to focus to the pelvis mobility
- 3) Our body is unified with the sea and flows gradually toward the sea bottom: embodiment of fluid moment that engages both the pelvis and our spine.
- 4) Our body is now directed toward the sea surface and becomes lighter: awareness of our weight and direction in the space is added.
- 5) The body breaks through the sea surface and reaches the sky: the movement becomes more energetic and broader.
- 6) The body is returning back as a water drop that falls again into the “Mother sea”: the whole body has been activated in its motility, quality enactment potentiality and spatiality awareness.

This morning practice had the duration of 15 to 20 minutes. The starting position was comfortably fixed for everybody but the evolution of the kinaesthetic itinerary was allowing an individual process to flourish.

Looking at ways of incorporating this practice to *Seabed*, I have opted for the duration of the experience to coincide with “Mother Sea’s” temporal frame. I have made this choice based on my process of reaching a deeper state of presence and awareness. In my examining of the time frame that has been needed in order to follow an escalation and depth in my experience, I arrived to the conclusion that participants shall ‘inhabit’ *Seabed* for approximately 15 minutes. The choice was made in order to assure that *Seabed* was offering them the possibility to be transported through different levels of perception of *the body of the relationship*.

### 2.1.2 Staging my bain-marie experience

*Seabed* creation process would consist on several stages including a) a first moment of elaborating upon the initial stimulus of being surrounded by the wind in Ireland, b) a later stage of visualization of an artificial environment that would evoke this sensation/ perception for the perceiver, c) a phase of crafting the actual piece in its physical premises d) a period of testing out the *Seabed* performative installation when participants would inhabit the space and e) a moment of reflexive analysis on what has been done and how this affected participants' immersive experience. *Seabed* reflects the mind-body state where the self, the environment and the movements are not separated (*Basho*). *Basho* has been explored by triggering this psychophysical elemental sensation of being within the wind. My first-hand experience of this sensation was quite complex; I recall perceiving contemporaneously my 'body's border' while at the same time sensing a more consistent quality of the air around me that was supporting my body weight, almost as if I was immersed in a liquid: I could compare this sensation to that of being inside a bain-marie on a stovetop.

*Butoh* dancers would cultivate their own approach to *Butoh*, for example Hijikata's *Ankoku Butoh*, Masaki's *Blanc Butoh*, Min's *Body weather* —whereas Takenouchi's school would be *Jinen Butoh*. I perceive an attunement between Takenouchi's (1986) concept of *Jinen Butoh* and my bain-marie term. Takenouchi (in his personal webpage) is referring to his *Butoh* School, explaining that

*Jinen* is an old Japanese word. Its meaning encompasses *ALL* that is even larger than nature. *Jinen* expresses the perception of the universe before any kind of

separation occurred...*Jinen Butoh* is to join together with all the life [...] already dancing, to dance with the flow of the universe [...] we remove the wall of consciousness that perceives dance as the individual 'I' dancing. We are dancing with, and are danced by [...] accepting all the environment and conditions around us as *Jinen*.

(Atsushi, 2012)

In *Seabed*, my research aimed to find out if and how *Jinen*'s consideration of the body as navigating within a realm that affects it -both as theory and practice- would potentially endorse immersion in *Seabed*.

## **2.1 Documentation of the crafting process**

In the next few pages, I am enclosing part of the documentation with photos that narrate the crafting process of the artwork at its different stages following a chronological order.



**Fig. 3** *Seabed* walls, delineating the orientation, dimension and position of the remaining space for the spectator.



**Fig. 4** *Seabed* walls evoking the water surface in an attempt to involve the bodily perception of the spectator.

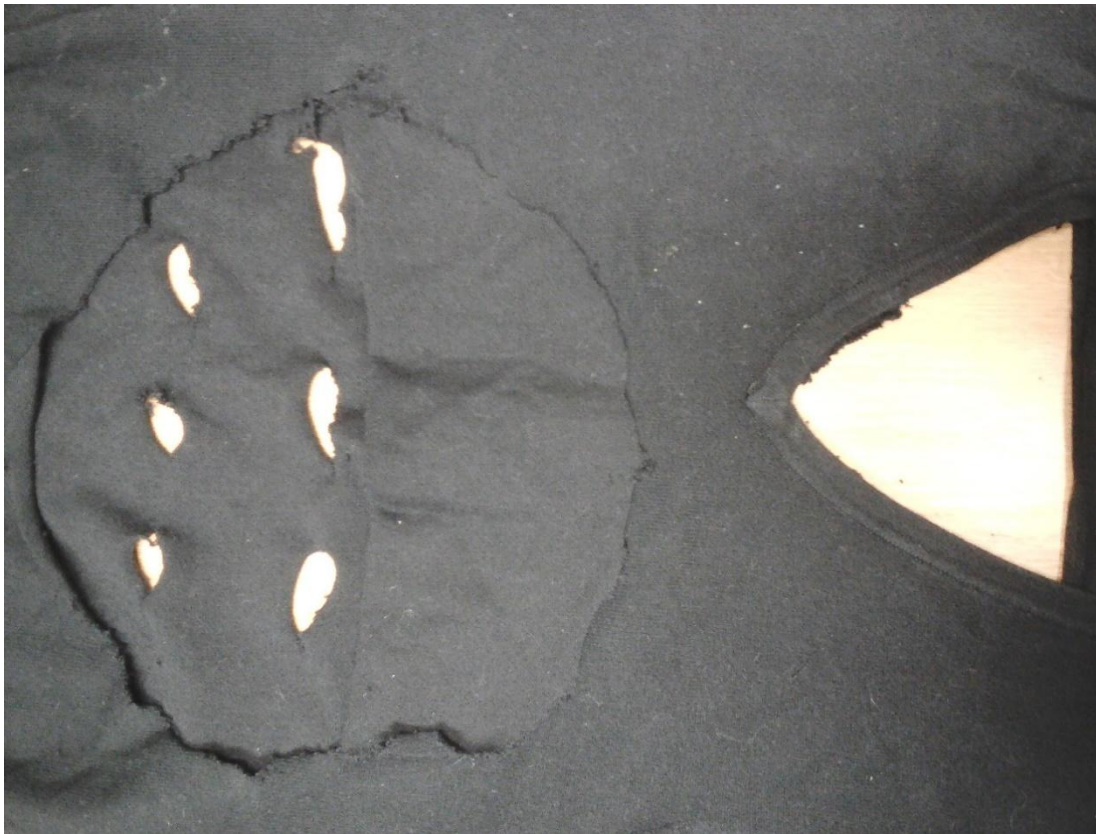


**Fig. 5** *Seabed* positioning a metallic structure that will host the spectator's body within the space in a way that it is surrounded by the walls.



**Fig. 6** *Seabed* acknowledging that light is part of the composition and it flows through.





**Fig. 7** *Seabed* directing attention to the voids created in the elaborated cloth in order to create shapes unrelated to the ordinary perception of them.



**Fig. 8** *Seabed* evoking floating sensation through the clotheslines' weight and position in relation to the reclining body of the perceiver.

## 2.3 Description of *Seabed*



**Fig. 9** *Seabed* invitation to the performative installation, March 2017, Magee Campus

My methodology concerning the participants' experience of the artwork was to provide them with individual time slots of 30 minutes duration each. Participants were asked to book themselves in advance online within a 4-day-window. In this way, I have tried to preserve enough time in order to welcome and accommodate each person individually within *Seabed*. Subsequently, they were given some time to fill in a feedback form that I later analysed for the purpose of this research. *Seabed* took place in the room that has been allocated to me as a studio. The room has been divided in two different areas: the separation marked by a black sheet hanging from the ceiling of the room clearly separated *Seabed* from the rest of the studio.

Participants would initially be introduced to this area and given some brief explanation before stepping into *Seabed*. As a follow up of their experience they were asked to write down some comments in the same neutral area. Entering the installation space, the light was quite soft bluish and emanated from the ceiling of the installation. The perceiver could still see some strips of light reaching from the neutral area. I was present within the room during the fruition of the piece because I was activating and manipulating the audio tracks but there was no direct visual contact between me and the perceiver.

In *Seabed*, the two walls have been painted and covered with plastic transparent sheets in order to create a surface that gives the tactile sensation of being in movement. The radiator has been covered with a board using the same technique as that of the wall in an attempt to create uniformity within the space. The back wall of the room had an indentation, therefore I decided to cover it with thin paper in order not to interrupt this image.

The ceiling has been covered with the same thin paper which has been fixed from one side of the room to the other. The covered distance was around three meters length and five meters width. A cloud or wave-like form was created because of the weight of the paper which enabled a series of irregular patterns to emerge. This has been aesthetically sought as I tried to give the whole installation the sensation of the waves/ flowing energy.

Under the softly lit ceiling, in the centre of the space, there was a metallic structure covered by a web of black clothes stitched one to each other. After entering the installation area, participants were asked to go underneath the metallic structure and lie down upon a black textile which was very thick and resistant and could partially sustain the weight of the person (mainly their extremities). This textile, being very

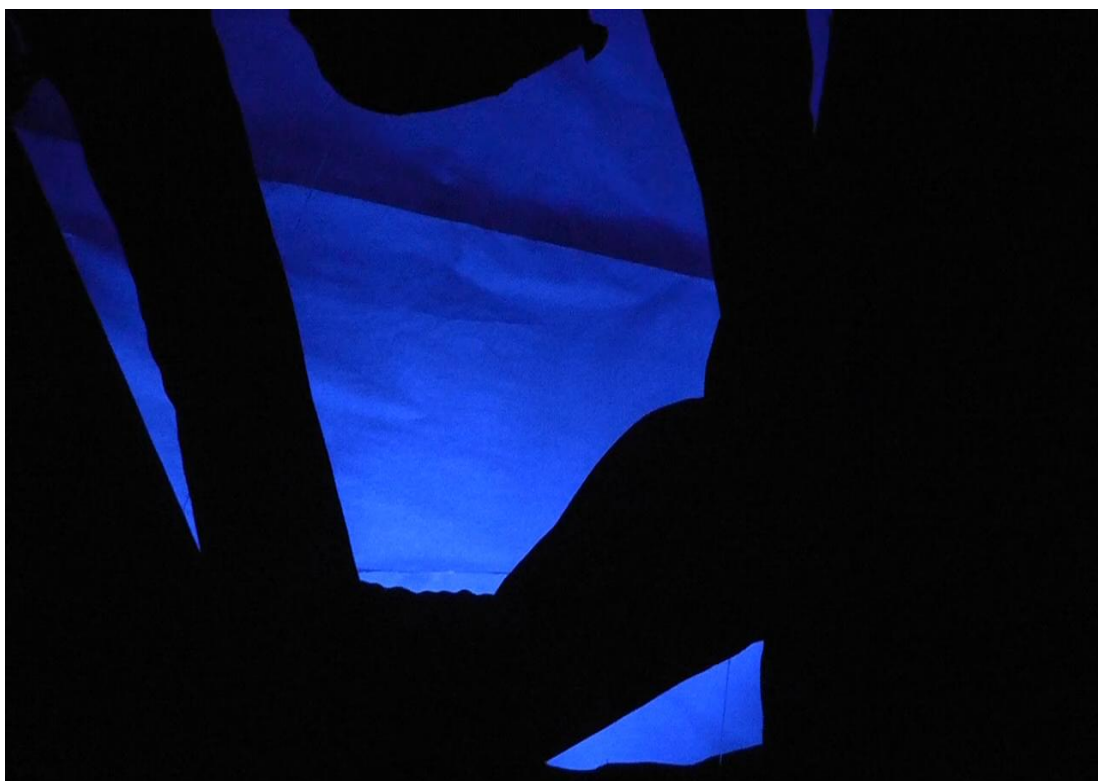


soft and elastic, is usually used by acrobats when they are hanging from heights. The suggested position to assume was the starting position of “Mother Sea”: flat back and bent knees.

The clotheslines were positioned over a web of fishing lines crisscrossing the metallic structure. Particular attention has been given to the use of the void in-between the clothes. The interplay of the clothes’ weight with absence-presence of light enabled a series of fluctuating patterns visible from the bottom. I have opted for a soft lighting and especially for blue light which is expected to produce a calming or dreamy effect, because I tried to minimize any hyperactive or energizing effects. The participants were encouraged to focus to their body perception, let their weight to be supported and forget gravity for a while. While listening to the sound texture and by allowing one’s self to be transported throughout the time-space created, an intimate relationship with the environment was gradually built for the majority of them.

During their presence within Seabed, I was playing an audio piece with the duration of 15 minutes. This way, their presence within the performative installation was marked in a quite clear way. The name of the piece is *Accumulation* performed by Hiroko Komiya and Atsushi Takenouchi track two of their CD *Pendulum sea* (2017). *Accumulation* was also the audio that Takenouchi often used during the *Butoh* seminar in our morning practice of “Mother sea”. The piece had a powerful effect of building intensities as it increased gradually as an accumulation of natural sounds including an interplay of the sound of rain and musical instruments that led to a crescendo. Two mixers were used in order to craft the intensity and volume arriving from the two tracks of *Accumulation* played with a slight delay.

The audio was reaching the perceiver from four different sources within the space all around the corners. Its intensity and volume were varying during the event: enacting a milieu, a surrounding and a landscape into which the human body was part of. In addition, under the soft textile that supported the participants a number of bubble wrap sheets were placed. This way, they could interact with the soundscape with the sound effect produced on the bubble wrap triggered by their micro-movements within *Seabed*.



**Fig. 10** *Seabed* view of clotheslines and light from inside the structure when facing upwards.

Another element of the installation was a small electric fan, positioned at the right corner of the back wall of the installation. The fan was producing a vibration in the air, a very slight effect of movement. Therefore, even if the participants chose to remain completely still within *Seabed*, there were some imperceptible movements occurring around them. This relates to the concept of *Basho* (Kasai 2000, p.358) as

a place formed by enveloped forces: a field of consciousness in-action. In this case, the fishing line threads are evoking this subtle inter-connectivity among human (perceiver) and non-human entities (arrangement of the work); the whole composition of the piece within the space was thought as an agglomeration of enveloping, interconnected forces and intensities that activate a flux of experience.

*Seabed* was not only a visual and sound landscape but marked an experiential space. It increased the perception of hidden “intensities” (Engel 2018, p. 2), instead of symbols, recognizable forms, and representation. In his dissertation proposal *Deleuze and the concept of intensity* (2018), Engel explains that “for Deleuze there is a sense in which intensity is prior to extensity, or space and that intensive magnitudes, such as temperatures and speeds, but also emotions, create the spatial characteristics of reality that we perceive.” (Ibid) I am borrowing the term intensity here in order to offer a different referential point of view upon *Basho*, coming from the European contemporary philosophical tradition.

Both Deleuze and Nishida, as could be argued here, are not approaching space as a mere spatial coordinate wherein our experience and its temporality takes place, but they rather call our attention to a field of intertwined multi-layered reality. *Seabed* did not aim to trigger realistic imagery. On the contrary, it aimed to trigger a disconnection from our ordinary way of thinking and acting. This was echoed in its title as well: a seabed, aside from being a part of nature, is also the deepest part of the sea. It is a place that conjures the image of a “repository” (Iwana 2011, p. 8) of memories and desires. The body perceived in its elemental existence is a living entity or a time-space container (ibid). In this respect, the body’s aging process or geological processes of storing climatic changes, earthquakes and volcanic

eruptions at the depths of the sea may allude to seabed's echoing with the concept of *Butoh-body*.

Equally, *Seabed* did not evoke the moment of realization but the very instance when those hidden "intensities" (Engel 2018, p. 2) within the body spring out and get nurtured by it. The idea of being in-the-world as seen by Nishida constitutes a philosophical grounding of the *Butoh-body* (Kasai 2000). Therefore, *Seabed* should not be understood as the visual representation of the depths of the sea, but as a conceptual artwork interlinked with and pointing to a modality of embodied perception close to Nishida's *Basho*.



**Fig. 11** *Seabed* final view seen from above the metallic structure.

## 2.4 Discussion of the focal points of the research

### 2.4.1 *Seabed: Enabling performative installation as natural process*

Through my research practice, natural processes are evoked. Process became a widespread preoccupation of artists in the late 1960s and the 1970s generating the movement of Process Art having as a key figure Jackson Pollock. As a general philosophical approach to making art, Process Art places its emphasis on the process and act of artistic creation rather than the actual finished work that comes out of it. Therefore, Process Art acts as a parallel practice a natural event for example sunset and sunrise. Process Art is concerned with the temporal dimension of an unfixed artwork or event (its frequency and duration) and its development throughout time and space in analogy to a natural process.

Similarly, *Seabed* was designed as an unfolding and ongoing experience in relation to natural phenomena. Tanaka Min, *Butoh* dancer and founder of *Body Weather* has been interviewed by Jonathan Marshall. His interview is incorporated in Marshall's essay "Dancing the elemental body" where Min refers to the origin of Asian and African dance traditions. Min states that Hijikata, one of the founders of *Butoh* has developed a primary model of the "stocky" body as a reaction to the "coherent" body of the Occident. (Marshall 2006, p.60) This body is closer to the ground than to the sky and draws from the lived experience of agriculture. "In *Kabuki* and *Noh*, the movement comes from farming. They are based on the agricultural body which is related to a farmer's life." (Ibid) In this respect, the "stocky" *Butoh-body* is more related to the animal instincts and basic needs of humanity. This approach, is in

contrast to a “coherent” idea of being rational, efficient and productive usually encountered in western societies.

According to Min, Hijikata “loved (physically and mentally) disabled people, farmers and especially old people.” (Ibid) In his dance, Hijikata tried to be like those people. Besides, the nuclear destruction in Japan and the sudden urbanization and westernization were among the factors that pushed to the surface a reactionary body that tried desperately to reconnect and rediscover its essential nature. This urge of regaining access to one’s primitive and basic self is being nurtured throughout *Seabed* throughout a research on immersivity.

During the *Butoh* seminar with Takenouchi, I had the chance to informally interview him. In some of our discussions emerged that his first study subject was natural sciences. He often spoke about natural processes when introducing movements and patterns in *Butoh* dance. He pointed out many connecting points with phenomena occurring in nature such as the change of the seasons or the transformation of life arguing that as everything is in a constant flow, so is *Butoh* dance. My research installations have an explicit connection to natural sites or phenomena; despite of taking place within an urban/ artificial environment. *Seabed* refers to the depths and multi-layered materiality of the sea; *Waste-is-land* refers to the materialization and the flow of the circle of life-death in plants; *Sky-field* is evoking the embodiment of the farming body and the juxtaposition between earth and sky.

#### **2.4.2 Music as an element that enables theatricality**

The performative installations that formed my practice-based research were perceived as compositions of different formal elements: visual, kinaesthetic and auditory. The aim was to activate an experiential place for the perceiver. I was working toward the compresence of those sensory stimuli that were shaping a landscape in its totality. In this regard, the sound was not meant to be perceived separately from the whole artwork.

In *Seabed*, the sound input played is *Accumulation*; performed by Atsushi Takenouchi and Hiroko Komiya (second piece from their album 'Pendulum sea', 2017). As already mentioned, also Takenouchi played *Accumulation* during "Mother sea" *Butoh-fu*. Its duration (15 minutes) has also marked the duration of the fruition of the piece by the audience. *Accumulation* is a togetherness of natural and organic sounds that build gradually a crescendo. The aim was to enhance the immersive effect which I perceive as a state of body awareness and will be further explained in the following sections of embodiment and stillness.

According to Kasai's (2005) paper "The Arm-standing exercise for psychosomatic training", *Butoh* as a method for psychosomatic exploration "has a threefold purpose: a) concentration b) relaxation c) bodily learning." (Kasai 2005, p.80) The arm-standing exercise, by guiding the attention of the perceiver to a specific body position, is eliminating stimuli and complex tasks that might cause distraction. Kasai argues that concentration and relaxation are leading to a bodily learning if carefully 'dosed' in a way. This means that the body is encouraged to find its thin balance between its openness and alertness. Attaining this balance between inward and

outward awareness is a complex task that if achieved echoes with Nishida's "Acting intuition." (1987)

For this reason, in *Seabed*, the perceiver was asked to do nothing but perceive oneself within it; lay within an out of the ordinary ambience that flowed within natural pace. This pace was carefully crafted with the deliberate choice of the music and the imperceptible alternation of its volume and the plurality of audio sources. The soundscape was created by the audio piece in addition with the ticking of the paper as a response to the periodic blasts of wind arriving from the electric fan and the bubble wrap sound interaction of the perceiver. *Seabed* symbolized the initial stage when creativity emerges; it is not the plant but its seed.

This subtle state is described accurately by Kasai as follows: "The unpredictable and creative movements in the improvisational Butoh dance symbolized the de-socialized body-mind that is liberated from the social, cultural, linguistical, historical, personal constraints that have suppressed the Id and its primary process in the Freudian sense." (Kasai 2005, p.4) This state could be described as an in-between stage among activity and passivity.

Takenouchi, during the seminar attended in October, often referred to the transformation as a motor of movement. The first transformation step to undertake was that of abandoning one's social presence in favour of the body-time: be patient until the body itself reveals its movement and inner qualities without forcing it to adopt a shape. Hence, Takenouchi would privilege a process-oriented research on movement rather than favouring a copy-model style. The *Butoh-fu* (scores) explored with him in the seminar were a chain of different states of presence, forms and emotional dwellings. On the other hand, music has an inherent performative aspect because it is time-based, in so far as it unfolds throughout time; therefore, music



marks a process. I have been considering the fact that transformation for the *Butoh-body* is not occurring in an instant or a frame, but it is rather a movement towards. For this reason, the use of music and its specific duration were crucial elements of the researched topic.

#### **2.4.3 Staging embodiment: pointing and linked to the body (dimension and duration)**

*Seabed* was designed around the human body's dimension and required the perceiver's presence in order to be activated. The researched element was the experiential space, and this is enacted through the dwelling (prolonged permanence) of the body into the installation. Therefore, I am suggesting and guiding the duration of the culmination of the installation insofar as it is a lived experience and not an art object to view by a detached perceiver.

Assuming a lying position within the metallic structure was part of the research design. It helped creating an unusual conditioning of the body while in a social mode. This posture transported the participants out of an ordinary pattern of perception and engagement with their surroundings. Here, my reference to ordinary or usual is connected to a body posture that we typically assume in our working place or when walking about in an urban space. A lying position would be related to more intimate and basic (animal) needs and it is immediately positing our attention to the body as the 'protagonist' of the specific experience.

Drew Leder's *The Absent Body* (1990) addresses the paradox that "one's body is rarely the thematic object of experience." (Leder 1990, p. 108 quoted by Zarilli, 2004, p. 656) For Leder, "the lived body (*Leib*) is not a homogenous thing, but rather a

complex harmony of different regions, each operating according to indigenous principles and incorporating different parts of the world into its space.” (Ibid) My research installations are attempting to restore the bodily awareness of the lived body that is navigating among all those different fields of action.

The centrality of the lived body has been earlier discussed by Merleau-Ponty in his book *Primacy of Perception* (1960). Merleau-Ponty would associate the lived body to *Leib*, referring to “the embodied experience” and opposing it to *Koerper* which would describe the physical body treated as “a thing, object, instrument, or machine under the command of an all-knowing mind.” (Zarilli 2004, p. 654) Leder is attempting to explain why the body, despite being the ground of the experience, tends to recede from direct experience. In his discourse, he is referring to the fact that “western society is typified by a certain ‘disembodied’ style of life. Our shelters protect us from direct corporeal engagement with the outer world, our relative prosperity alleviating immediate physical needs and distress.” (Leder 1990, p.3) Leder also refers to the technological developments of rapid communication and transportation that overcome the “natural limits” of our bodies (Ibid). For him, this explains our rising interest to find our way back to the body which here is seen more as a trend or fashion of body’s re-appropriation of the contemporary societies.

Therefore, Leder’s viewing of the body as experiencer is leading to the notion of the lived body which “provides a potential mode of escape from cognitive habits of dualism deeply entrenched in our culture.” (Leder 1990, p. 5) This approach is viewing the self as an integrated entity and reduces the primacy of a de-corporealized mind. Leder is examining the lived body as the “seat of the intellectual thought”, stating that “in the lived body, the physical and existential always

intertwine.” (Leder 1990, p. 44) Leder’s discourse is acknowledging that the body has a primal role in our shaping of perception as a conduit of experience.

*Seabed*’s research design has been ideated and crafted around the body. Britta Bountry-Stadelmann, in his essay “Yuasa Yasuo’s Theory of the Body”, states that for Yuasa —Japanese philosopher of religion—, “Descartes’ separation of mind and body initiated a philosophical tradition in which mind (spirit) and body (matter) are opposed.” (Bountry-Stadelmann 2006, p. 293) According to Yuasa, this led to two apparently incompatible systems of thought; idealism (mind’s privilege over the body) and materialism (body is given more attention than the mind) (Ibid). Bountry-Stadelmann comments that “rather than insisting on their rigid difference, Yuasa treated body and spirit as a whole...This approach, however, was not viewing mind body synergy as a ‘natural’ phenomenon.” (Ibid) Instead, Yuasa was suggesting that conscious effort and special training should be used in order to reach this synergic state—mainly referring to either sitting or movement-based meditation practices.

Yuasa is illustrating his idea upon a process-oriented approach towards the mind-body harmonization, in his book *The body, self-cultivation and ki energy* (1993). His point of view, resonates with Nishida’s approach on the artist-philosophers that require time to find their attunement in-the-world through Zen practice —already encountered in chapter 1. Yuasa’s approach is meaningful in this research because it points out that there are variable levels of refinement of this mind body relationship among different persons in base to their conscious effort to engage in specific training. This is important in order to highlight the disparate levels of engagement among the participants as it emerged from the written feedback collected after their *Seabed* experience.

Yuasa has developed “the idea of a ‘quasi-body system’, a kind of map that represents the link of shared space between the mind and the body in which the mental or ‘energetic’ body crosses over into the physiological body.” (Bountry-Stadelmann 2006, p.297) Bountry-Stadelmann states that “for Eastern metaphysics of immanence perspective, individual, personalized experience is seen as authentic and sincere...Transcendental and universal concepts are seen as mere abstractions.” (Ibid, p. 298) We might assume that his point of view depends on the extension of body-mind training which determines the lived body experience; this fact could be extended to that of *Seabed*.

*Seabed* as a togetherness of stimuli, would like to address the “Aesthetic inner body mind” (Zarilli 2004, p. 657) which is one of the four modalities of our bodily presence in-the-world identified by Zarilli; the first is the Ecstatic-surface body that concerns the flesh (exteroception), and its direction is outward. The second is the Recessive-visceral body, which is situated in the blood (interoception) and tends to be inward. The third is the Aesthetic-inner body mind, which is located in the breath and encompasses the simultaneous access to the above-mentioned bodies—hence, it requires a deeper interconnectivity and an intentional approach. The fourth modality of body presence according to Zarilli, would be the Aesthetic outer-body that refers to the former fashion (Aesthetic-inner body mind) while being also aware of its appearance: we might say that this is the case of a body that performs. (Ibid)

In relation to Zarilli’s modalities of presence, another salient research design element of *Seabed* has been decided: the individual experience of the piece. This choice was about not encouraging—in fact, hopefully discouraging—a social body presence. Here, I am thinking as social state of body-mind that conditioning of presence which occurs when we are potentially seen from outside. This includes others’ gaze or

mirrors (our gaze) who are, in a way, interlinked to our persona. Therefore, the idea is that providing a private space where the participants are facilitated to recollect themselves would be potentially helpful to reach a private—thus non-social—state of presence.

#### **2.4.4 Stillness in *Butoh*: *Seabed*, an inwardly driven installation in dialogue with nature**

*Seabed* offered a structure wherein participants were in a way engulfed by the space. Analyzing the participants' written feedback, I have encountered often the description of the piece as 'den', 'tent in an outdoors setting' or 'womb-like' structure. Those descriptions are related both to the dimension of the installation and the posture that people were asked to assume: once entering the room, they had to bend and insert themselves in *Seabed*—as if it was a receptacle. This coiled up position relates to the *Butoh*-body's posture.

Fraleigh (2016) mentions that anthropologist Christal Whelan (2006) has been interested in the *Butoh* aesthetics and the pre-socialized body in connection to the country life or the early years of both Hijikata and Ohno. "What became one of *Butoh*'s most typical postures—a bow legged crouch was the familiar stance often seen—when farmers consumed by hunger and permanently stooped from cropping rice in the fields." (Fraleigh 2016, p. 66) Whelan is connecting *Butoh*'s postures to a pre-socialized body therefore a body "open to new creative forms of expression." (Ibid) Here, the socialized body would be understood as a more elaborated way of standing in order to communicate verbally—hence moving away from a pre-verbal

fashion of interaction among each other. The latter is approached as raw and bare, therefore offering itself to alternative and creative means of transformation.

In *Seabed*, the participants were asked to do nothing. This choice is interlinked to the *Butoh* embodiment. *Butoh* dancers do not express feelings, emotions, ideas or images; they do not act appositely. Instead, they cultivate and enhance a perception of their body in its non-social presence. In other words, the first requisite is to abandon social time. For Fraleigh, “Butoh [...] is not based on steps, but rather on images and atmospheric change, eliciting affects of bodily being.” (Fraleigh 2016, p. 61) She adds that “nature is important in Butoh and this announces an eco-friendly presence [...] a decidedly anti-anthropocentric position.” (Ibid, p.62) This approach would place the body in the midst of its context as an entity with fluid boundaries: a body that shapes and is shaped in a reciprocal way.

My understanding of a social-oriented body is related to a dualistic/ function orientated existence where we handle objects in order to achieve, obtain something through them: objects perceived as tools. At the same time, a social-oriented body is itself perceived as an instrument (*Koerper*). Kasai refers to this state as objectification: “Body objectification means that consciousness directs, and the body becomes something to be controlled and moved by volition. Not using mirrors in training is one of the examples of non-objectification in vision.” (Kasai 2000, p.259) The *Butoh-body* is receptive to its environment, somehow in fusion with it. In a similar way to that of “Butoh dancers paying attention to nature, and not through inspection or objectively but more aesthetically as in Zen” (Fraleigh 2016, p. 65), there was nothing to do inside *Seabed* than to stay within it: an invitation just to be (within) and arrest our being active.

Paola Esposito and Toshiharu Kasai in their essay “Butoh dance, Noguchi Taiso and healing”, argue that “both Butoh and Noguchi Taiso actualize notions of the body-mind as contiguous with the environment.” (Esposito & Kasai 2017, p. 255) Noguchi has developed a body-mind technique aiming primarily at healing through the correct use of body posture replacing the muscle-skeletal system conception with the notion of body weight. In *Seabed*, the stretched textile that accommodated the participants’ weight played a central role in the idea of abandoning our active presence. Correspondingly, “Noguchi substituted an image of the body as a muscle-skeletal system evoking activity and rigidity to one of the body as subject to a somatically perceived entity—the god of gravity—evoking passivity and yielding.” (Ibid, p. 260) Noguchi’s vision upon the body is focusing upon its materiality, therefore its likeness and interconnectedness to natural sources in large.

Moreover, Esposito and Kasai (Ibid, p. 266) explain that in *Butoh*, dancers often use stillness as part of their dance. I am here relating stillness in *Butoh* to the researched state of non-activity/ receptivity in *Seabed*. They add that “such stillness has nothing static in it, as it is grounded in perceptual attention to involuntary self-movement. As such, stillness is charged with the experiential integrity of being alive.” (Ibid) Tadashi Suzuki’s training (which is informed by *Noh* Theatre) also attempts to integrate physical and mental systems to create a body-mind for actors. In doing so, Suzuki often encompasses stillness. Allain Paul has translated Suzuki’s writings and noted that Suzuki’s practice refers to “a notion, found also in *Noh* Theatre described as ‘outside stop, inside no-stop’ [...] the car may have braked but the engine must still rewind fiercely.” (Allain 2002, p.117) Similarly, in *Seabed*, the stillness was not a signifying a complete inactivity but an inward focused attention.

#### 2.4.5 Enabling voids: the concept of *Ma*

*Seabed* has been designed as a performative installation that involves and evokes *Ma*. Richard Pilgrim gives the following explanation of this concept: “A room is called *Ma*, for example, as it refers to the space between walls; a rest in music is also *Ma* as the pause between the notes or sounds.” (Pilgrim 1986, p. 255) During the crafting process, great attention has been given to the distances between the metallic structure and the walls, among the loudspeakers, the fan and the structure, the clothes holes and stitched in-between spaces, the body of the perceiver and the installation space.

Pilgrim, adds that “*Ma* is not a mere emptiness or opening; through and in it shines a light and the function of *Ma* becomes precisely to let that light shine through.” (Pilgrim 1986, p. 258) Similarly, in *Seabed*, the open texture of the web of clotheslines above the metallic structure has allowed the blue light coming out from the ceiling to encounter the body of the perceiver. Pilgrim (1986) argues that *Ma* is a concept related to Shinto religion and is therefore met often in sacred spaces. Those open areas would be designed appositely in such a way in order to accommodate the coming and going of kami (deities in Japan). In Japanese sacred places —as temples and Zen gardens—, “the light shining through the door is, for Shinto, the light of kami.” (Pilgrim 1986, p. 264) In analogy to their architectural approach, I have opted for pre-planning and accommodating *Ma* in *Seabed*.

Therefore, “*Ma* as a ‘way of sensing’ and ‘an expectant stillness’ implies a particular mode of experience or sensitivity, one that is highly attuned to the immediacy of sensual experience.” (Pilgrim 1986, p. 270) This aspect of *Ma* makes it closely related to an event and reconnects with the *Butoh-body* as a perceptual operator in



movement within the space. While in general, “in Western movement-base performance, action/movement and meaning coincide; Movement is read as text to generate meaning [...] in *Butoh*, ‘meaning’ and ‘opportunities for reading’ exist as much in the spaces between actions as in the actions themselves.” (Hamera 1990, p. 56) This in-between quality of *Ma* resonates with Schechner’s description of theater as that which includes “not just what happened between the raising and lowering of a curtain [...] but also all the preparatory interactions between spectators and the performance space.” (Loxley 2007, p.149) What becomes clear here, is that *Ma* as a concept is strictly related to performativity.

Judith Hamera (1990) argues that the use of *Ma* to characterize *Butoh* in an absolute way would be somewhat problematic because the cultural political backgrounds that they would represent are quite opposite. However, *Ma* could be used as a term that accurately describes the process/ feeling of reading *Butoh*. An analogous approach is proposed in order to relate *Seabed* to *Ma*; this will emerge in a clearer way as the semantics of the word *Butoh* are unravelled below. Pilgrim is acknowledging that *Ma*, or “the collapse of space and time as two distinct and abstract objects can only take place in a particular mode of experience [...] only in aesthetic, immediate, relational experience can space be perceived as identical with the events or phenomena occurring in it.” (Pilgrim 1986, p. 256) Hence *Seabed*, marking an extra-daily experience, might foster this specific mode of perception.

In Japanese, the term *Ma* refers to the spatial concept of the void between volumes in the space. However, the striking difference from the western point of view is that the interval between entities is not perceived as empty and “it is neither created by compositional elements: It is the thing that takes place in the imagination of the human who experiences these elements. Therefore, *Ma* can be defined as

experiential place understood with emphasis on interval.” (Fletcher 2001, p.170) I am considering whether shifting our attention or recognizing *Ma* is already resolving the ‘problem’ of the dichotomy between subject and object; this research explores whether acknowledging *Ma*, would enable the western viewer to sense the *Basho*, if *Basho* is seen as the togetherness of “bodies” and *Ma*.

Scholar and practitioner Christine Bellerose, in her Master Dissertation *Being Ma in movement: space-time in Butoh, Somatic practice and Durational Performance art* (Bellerose 2015, p. 61) is attempting to de-codify *Ma*:

The difficulty of defining *Ma* lays in the fact that Japanese language has a structural semantic function based on overlays of ideas...A word suggests, and within the suggestion lives a plurality of images. Typical of an image-definition, *Ma* is best understood as process rather than a fixed idea. (Bellerose 2015, p. 11)

Bellerose is bridging art making with theory in her dissertation by discussing show case studies of performance artists and her own work as practitioner.

In the film *Piercing the mask* (2007) Yoshida Yoshie, professor of semantics, explains the word *Bu-toh*:

Grammatically speaking, the *Bu* part means *on*, that means that this word is not Japanese (because it refers to a western concept). In Japanese, the equivalent is *Ma-i* [...] *Bu* can mean different things. *Ma-i* means to do the action of *Ma*...Europeans have a rational frame of mind; thus, they think in terms of (linear) distance. While Japanese *Ma* refers to something roundish, smooth and

embracing. *Ma* is used for something circular, a break or a window that means a pause that enables us to recognize space. (Yoshida 2017, 4:37 min)

Concerning the *Toh* component, Yoshida adds:

*Toh*, is an Asian concept or better a Third World one and it belongs to pantheism, where gods are found in many things. The syncopated step of *Toh* (stamping) relates to the belief that the power is drawn from the earth; strength is drawn in through the feet while for a European, God is above the people. *Toh* reflects a religious thinking that has not undergone a logical explanation. Thus, *Toh* (percussion) means gaining strength by stamping. (Ibid, 6:12 min)

The intermittent structure of the piece—the modalities of intertwining the material—is important in order to understand the connection between my practice and *Bu-toh* body. In *Seabed*, all elements—including the metallic structure, the clotheslines with holes, the gaps between the threads, the distance of the metallic structure from the walls, the positioning of the loudspeakers in such a way that they included the perceiver, the breeze emanated by the electric fan in an intervallic fashion—were related to the idea of doing *Ma*; in this case, this did not occur because of the bodies' movement within the space-as in *Butoh*—, but by segmenting it visually and kinaesthetically. I have been hence “stamping” the space with sculptural volumes marking a space where the viewer's body was one of the rest of bodies that formed the performative installation. Therefore, the alternation of plain and empty forms inside *Seabed* was a morphological and conceptual element that is related to *Bu-toh*.

#### **2.4.6 Activation of the spatial awareness: formal composition of *Basho***

In the previous paragraph I have explained why the formal composition of *Seabed* comprises a series of elements and their distance as a wholeness in relation to the concept of *Ma*. In addition to this aspect and in reference to the concept of *Basho*, the metallic structure was placed in the centre of the space. Besides, the loudspeakers were positioned in an equal distance from the spectator in order to create an 'embracing' effect. This effect was accentuated by the fact that the participants were invited to enter a 'cave-like' structure, finding themselves surrounded by clotheslines and supported by the black textile. The physicality of the performative installation as a constellation of different elements/ bodies was pointing to a place and functioned as an ongoing invitation to be inhabited.

John Krummel, in his essay "On (the) nothing: Heidegger and Nishida", is explaining that "in Western metaphysics, Plato has been oriented around the dichotomization between form and matter or thought and reality", whereas "the root of Eastern culture harbors within itself that which sees the form of the formless and hears the sound of the soundless." (Krummel 2017, p. 3) This formless quality is often being referred to as nothing-ness by Nishida. Krummel explains that "the 'nothing' for Nishida does not mean utter nothingness or that there is nothing existing. It entails a dynamism that perpetually forms itself while remaining essentially formless." (Ibid) Here, formlessness might be associated to the experience itself which is by nature, unfixed and shaped by time in relation to space as distance which is rather fixed and measurable; formlessness as a process.

For Nishida “to be, is to be emplaced” (Nishida 1926 quoted by Krummel 2017, p.7), even if that refers to an un-grounded place. Similarly, for Heidegger, the notion of place particularly encountered in his topology, is given a salient importance. Heidegger states that “what a being is depends on certain conditions in the background that constitute its sense or meaning, that is, its being.” (Krummel 2017, p. 13) According to Jeff Malpas (2012), what guides Heidegger’s thinking is a conception of philosophy where the idea of experience stands at the core: “our finding ourselves already ‘there’, in the world, in ‘place.’” Therefore, “being has to be understood as an effect of place” in the sense that “being and place are emerging one from each other.” (Malpas 2012, p.6)

Malpas (2012) argues that according to Heidegger, our existence is given over to a ‘situatedness’ in the world from which we cannot set ourselves aside. Moreover, in the question of the nature of such situatedness, our own existence is equally called into question. However, what is at stake “in Heidegger’s idea of ‘being-in’ (in German: Umwelt) as this relates to the idea of ‘being there’ (in German: Da-sein) is not a matter of spatial ‘containment’ or ‘location’ in the sense associated with objective spatiality.” (Ibid, p. 74). Both Nishida and Heidegger’s concepts around body’s dwelling refer to a much broader sense of ‘inhabiting life’. In analogy to their approach, *Seabed* would like to trigger a field of discussion and expand our perception towards our environment in large.

#### **2.4.7 “Ecological materiality”: life and death are merging in symbiotic systems (interrelation of human and non-human entities)**

All was equally important inside *Seabed* and co-operated in synergy: the compresence of different elements with their intensities and materiality created a field of forces. The entities involved here were designed in their *togetherness*: fishing line-threads that sustained the clothes and merged into patterns that dialogued with the light that broke through them. The four loudspeakers spread through the corners of the room were waving invisible sound vibration-threads. The shaken air produced by the fans was audible and visible through its effect upon the textile that supported the body. Perceiver’s body micro-movements produced sound —from their pressure against the bubble wrap— and melt within the soundscape of *Seabed*.

Jane Bennett (2009), in her book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* refers to Bruno Latour’s term *actant*, which is here defined as a source of action that could be either human or non-human. Based on this term, she emphasizes the agentic presences of non-human forces encountered in nature, within the human body or in human artifacts, marking an effort to balance the narcissistic reflex of human articulation of thinking. In *Seabed*, the non-activity of the human body laying among a landscape of objects invited us to reconsider its absolute centrality. Bennett is quoting W.T.J. Mitchell who states that “objects are the way things appear to the subject.” (Mitchell 2010, pp.56-7 quoted by Bennett 2009, p.2) Therefore, she suggests viewing an assemblage where objects appear as “vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them.” (Ibid, p.5) For her, “an *actant* is neither an object nor a subject but an ‘intervener’, an ‘operator’. An operator is that which, by virtue of its particular location in an assemblage...makes the

difference, makes things happen, becomes the catalyst of an event.” (Ibid, p. 9) This point of view upon the potentiality of non-human agents to shape a situation, is drawing our attention to their performative nature in relation to their materiality.

Bennett invites us to recognize that human power is itself a kind of thing power by acknowledging that our bodies are “composed by various material parts” such as “the minerality of our bones, the metal of our blood or the electricity of our neurons.” (Ibid, p. 10) By adding that an *actant* never acts alone but its efficacy depends on interactive interference of many bodies and forces, she draws our attention to “the concept of agency...which is distributed across an ontologically heterogeneous field rather than a capacity localized in a human body.” (Ibid, p. 23) This field of agency, called Vibrant Matter by Bennett, resonates with the concept of *Basho* that constitutes the focus of this performative installation.

In addition, Latour’s thought is pertinent to the vibrancy of the materiality which is discussed by Bennet (Ibid, p.103) as follows: “Latour explicitly rejects the categories of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ in favour of the collective which refers to an ecology of human and non-human elements.” In this respect it would be crucial to develop an acuteness towards the ‘call of the matter’ in order to grasp what and how the perceiver is invited to respond to it. This stance would require a pro-active predisposition towards materiality in large.

James Gibson (1977) offers the valuable concept of “affordances” which I will try to unravel in order to shed more light to the modalities with which things are empowering our human world; the concept of affordances focuses to objects as agents that are constantly positing a request for a response from the human body. Gibson (1977, p. 67) suggests that “the affordance of anything is a specific combination of the properties of its substance and its surfaces taken with reference

to an animal...The properties of substance and surface are here described in ecological physics.” Moreover, he adds that we tend to perceive as ‘meaningful’ a special set of properties instead of isolating them into single ones. Gibson argues that a set of affordances constitute a “niche”: “ecologically speaking, a niche, although not literally a place, is a set of environmental features.”(Ibid, p. 69) Those features, in an animal basic level, either accommodate or not the body. So, for example, let us consider that “a man can bite into an apple but not a rock.” (Ibid, p. 79) Therefore, the qualities that a non-human entity emanates invite a certain type of human activity, approach; this argument in its extension is suggesting that a setting could even evoke a particular mood.

What is meaningful in Gibson’s *Theory of affordances*, in relation to *Seabed* is that “perception of the environment is inseparable from proprioception of one’s own body—that ego reception and exteroception are reciprocal...a human being measures these features of the environment by the standard of its body.” (Ibid) Accordingly, the dimension and steadiness of the metallic structure within the space, the natural pace of the performative installation, the softness of the supporting textile and malleability of the light moving freely among voids were all responding to the need of setting out an arrangement that “speaks for itself”; in doing so, it invites a particular modality of presence to emerge.



## 2.5 Contextualization of *Seabed* within practitioners' work



**Fig. 12** Brown T. (2007) *Floor of the forest* [Installation] Kassel: Documenta12



**Fig. 13** Brown T. (1970) *Floor of Forest* [Installation] New York: Hammer Museum

While working with the visualization of *Seabed*, and through its crafting process, I came across the previous work of other practitioners such as:

a) *Floor of the Forest* by Trisha Brown.

It was first performed in 1970 in New York City's downtown Soho neighbourhood by T. Brown and Carmen Beuchat. It consists of a sculptural steel frame holding up a web of ropes that have been threaded with colourful used clothing. Placed at eye-level, this horizontal plane becomes a soft platform for two dancers to negotiate... (Trisha Brown: *Floor of the forest*, 2013)

Salient points of resonance are observable between *Floor of the Forest* and *Seabed* such as the formal aspects and the materials of the artefacts, the engagement with nature, the placement of the human body (ies) within a structure that embraces and supports. However, I understand that Brown's work was operating more towards a materiality of the body which constitutes an impermeable surface that incorporates the clothes and the bodies. In *Floor of the Forest*, the activation of the piece is done by a group of performers while the audience is witnessing their action: in this sense, the performers' bodies are the protagonists; they act upon the structure. On the contrary, in *Seabed*, the participants' experience has been designed to be individual in order to assure privacy (a non-social mode of being). My intention has been to create and enhance the conditions and stimuli in order to maintain or stimulate the body's receptivity to the environment. The participant's body in *Seabed* was ideally like a "dormant" volcano simply being among other non-human entities: Iwana mentions that in *Butoh* "inner elements [...] have already been present within the

dancer's body and are actualized out of their dormancy.” (Iwana 2011, p.11) For this reason, each perceiver's experience is preserving its uniqueness.

b) *Wind* by Hans Haacke (Burnham, 1967). This installation comprises a large piece of white fabric covering almost the whole floor of the room at about 20 cm from the pavement. The material is hovering and waving by the air coming out the wall. This installation shares the concept of the air movement and aims to depict it in its three-dimensional physicality. Instead, my performative installation aimed to depict the body's sensation/perception fostered by the wind's presence and their interrelation within the space; *the body of the relationship*. Haacke's work is not an orchestrated experience that positions the body of the audience at its heart. It is a kinaesthetic and visual offering to a viewer that is not given any particular access to an interactive relationship with her/his surroundings.

c) *Swimming Pool* by Leandro Erlich is an art installation with a permanent home at the 21st Century Museum of Art of Kanzawa, Japan. It has also had temporary installations at MoMAPS<sup>1</sup> and the Venice Biennale. Conceived in 1999, *Swimming Pool* allows visitors to look down into a pool, seemingly full of water, with fully clothed visitors walking around the bottom of the pool. From below, the blurry vision of looking up when underwater is recreated using a thin piece of glass with water running over the top of it. *Swimming Pool* is the visual three-dimensional representation of a swimming pool and creates a visual effect of being under the water when perceived by the viewer; whereas *Seabed* was a manifestation of being surrounded by the wind and in doing so borrowed visual and kinaesthetic stimuli of the sea bottom. Another difference concerns the modality with which the experience

was facilitated as well as the message conveyed here. *Swimming Pool* works as a collective multisensory experience with impressive dimensions and effect upon the body of viewers, whereas *Seabed* was a small-scale experimental project that would like to activate an interpersonal linkage among the participants and their environment.



**Fig. 14** Lee U. (1971) Relatum [Installation] Tokyo: Pinar Gallery

Joan Kee (2018) in her essay “Points, Lines, Encounters: The world according Lee Ufan” introduces the South Korean and Japan- based artist and critic Lee Ufan as “a key figure of *Mono-Ha*, or Things School.” (Kee 2018, p. 403) *Mono-Ha* was a Japanese avant-garde practice; its members were known mainly “for their espousal of things [...] whose fundamental material properties were allowed to be shown without alteration.” (Ibid) Lee’s work —depicted above— is an open invitation to the audience to wander around the sculptural objects and choose their



own route or perspective. Kee stresses out that here, “ The artwork is only activated upon the viewer’s sustained engagement with the terms of its material and physical presence.” (Ibid) Furthermore, she argues that this situation might be seen as “re-distribution of agency.” (Ibid, p.410) Kee mentions that among Lee’s philosophical sympathies were Nishida Kitaro’s theories of *Basho* (place) and *Mu* (nothingness) and Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on perception. Lee’s initial title of the first series of paintings made around 1967 was *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962)—referencing Merleau-Ponty’s theories. This initial title was changed to *Relatum* later, as Lee emphasized the relationship between objects seen as a combination of different materials often untouched -raw-by the artist. (Ibid, p.9)

Lee’s approach was deeply impregnated by the desire to encourage “a prolonged reflection of the interdependencies between the viewer, the work and the artist as a possible way of escaping both the authority of institutions and the authority of anti-institutional art.” (Ibid, p. 424)



**Fig. 15** Lee U. (2018) *Relatum-Stage*, London: Serpentine Galleries

Lee's direct, sensory related and nature inspired approach resonates with my way of perceiving the creation of the space that would accommodate the perceiver. However, in *Seabed*, there was no use of organic materials; instead, the artwork operated as a vehicle or reminder of natural pace and mood which was accordingly called into action as a concept. In addition, Lee tackles the idea of *Basho* and relevant to my research concepts of phenomenology. This is reflected in the formal elements of his artworks which often function as a stage; *Seabed* was also staging the enactments of the encounter between the perceiver and the work itself.



**Fig. 16** Castoro R. Focus at infinity (2017) [exhibition] Barcelona: MACBA. 9 Nov. 2017 -15 Apr. 2018



**Fig. 17** Castoro R. Focus at infinity (2017) [exhibition] Barcelona: MACBA. 9 Nov. 2017-15 Apr. 2018

Rosemarie Castoro found her initial inspiration in modern dance, often performing for Yvonne Rainer. This experience has developed Castoro's interest in exploring three-dimensional space and its dynamics. In the series of works depicted here, the common element is the use of the body within the space or in relation to an object/material. In the late 1960s, she extended her practice into the fields of Concrete Poetry, Concept Art and Site-specific interventions. Her researched area was the experienced space.

In her interview with Alex Bacon published on October 2015 at the Art journal *The Brooklyn Rail*, she mentions that: "The quality of the repeated pattern and the angles that I used, has a lot to do with dance, as well, with creating space, choreographing." We encounter a parallel attitude in Bruce Nauman's *Stamping in the studio* (1968) where he filmed from above himself simply stamping different rhythms inside his



studio. Similarly, the *Butoh-body* in *Seabed* (and my research in its wholeness) was acting as the referential point or axis of the creation process in the arrangement of the space.

Castoro often documented her own practice and reflected upon it by keeping a journal where she “performed her creations.” This lived space was marked by the presence of her minimalistic paintings or sculptures often in large dimension in order that “you can really experience the idea, because you are immersed.” (Castoro interviewed by Bacon, 2015)



**Fig. 18** Castoro R. 1970s, working (or performing) in her Soho studio, New York

Bruce Nauman—known as one of the main expressers of installation art—has shown an inclination to cross-wire disciplines early on. Michael Auping (2004) argues that he (Nauman) would invent the term “Metacommunication messages” to describe “a



complex condition: The combining of two words, 'meta' (between, among) and communication (the act of transmitting) suggests the existence of porous boundaries within a kind of communication that can take place 'between' signals." (Auping 2004, p. 8) In other words, he referred to what in gestalt terms is "greater than the sum of each parts." (Ibid) This approach is related and rooted to *Basho* and New materialism conceptualization of our 'being in-the- world' that acknowledge a dynamic interdependence among parts instead of an addition/ sum of bits that creates the whole as such.

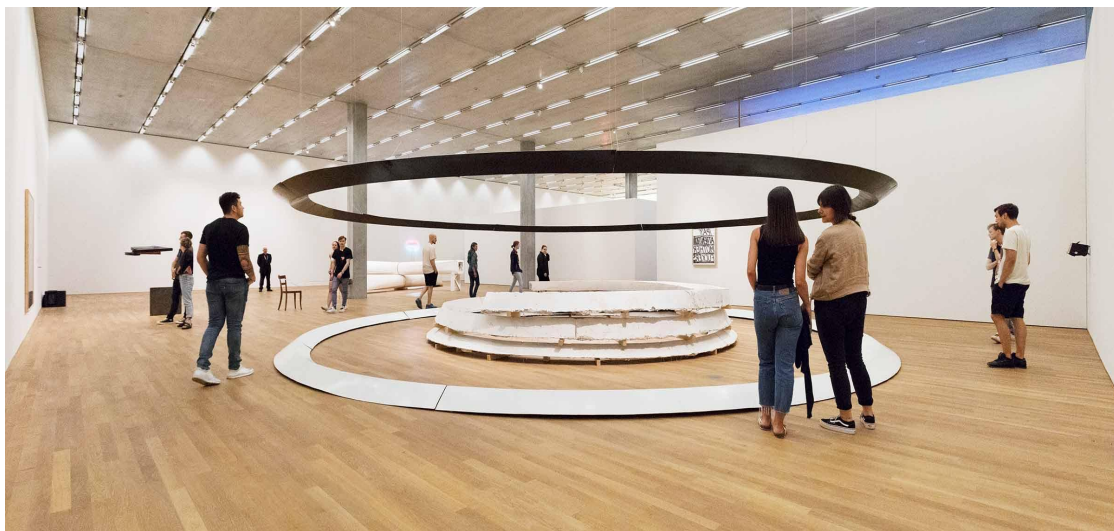


**Fig. 19** Nauman B. (1970) Green light corridor [Installation] TX: Contemporary Austin 26 Sept. 2015 -24 Jan. 2016.

In *Green light corridor*, Nauman created a space that leads to an experience for the audience, which has been described as disquieting or claustrophobic for most of them. People were entering individually a narrow corridor and were going through it while englobed by a fluorescent green light. Auping comments that these empty

rooms, being “resolutely themselves, they reveal Nauman’s anti formalist tendencies [...] As such, Nauman’s spaces reflect his phenomenological, psychological and political concerns.” (Ibid, p. 19) Auping adds that when confronted with Nauman’s work we often realize that “the entire experience is intrinsically a performance.” (Ibid, p. 21)

Auping mentions that Nauman has had an influence from Zen Center practices and his readings of *Zen mind, beginner’s mind* by Suzuki Roshi, and that he would develop the notion of “seeing with the dump eye.” In other words, perception was at the core of his research and his art was a pursuit of heightened awareness of one’s self and the situation he/she happens to be embedded.



**Fig. 21** Nauman B. (1977) Model for Trench and Four Buried Passages. [Installation] Basel: Glenstone Museum. 17 March–26 August 2018.

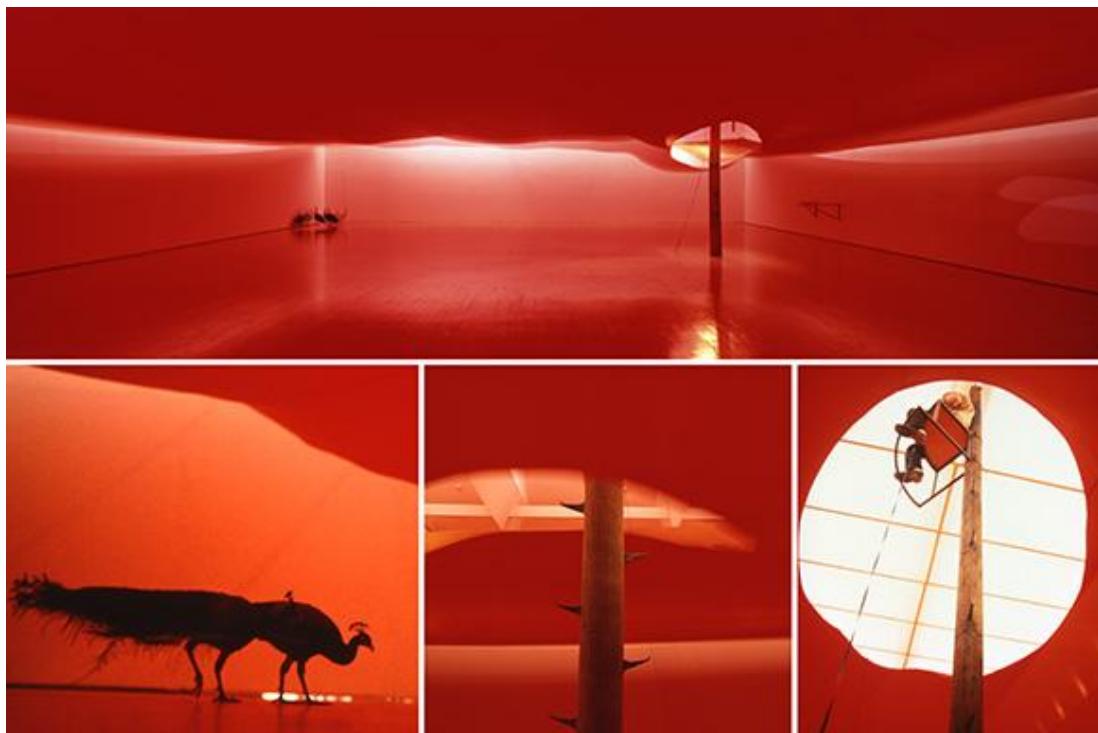
Ann Hamilton is a contemporary artist that works with “the pre-language where the animal and the human meet.” (Raspail 1998, p. 12) In the same passage, her work has been described as “archaic, synthetic and pregnant with a discreet globality.” (Ibid) Also, Patricia Phillips, in her analysis of Ann Hamilton’s work *Mattering* (1977), describes her objects as “synaptic, creating both boundaries and connections for prolonged meaning.” (Phillips 1998, p. 116) *Mattering* featured “an

undulating canopy of red-orange silk hovered above a vast gallery space, empty but for a restricted number of visitors, who shared the territory with five male peacocks walking about or sitting on any of the six wall-mounted perches. The space was more theirs (peacocks') than the visitors." (Simon 2002, p. 193) This space created englobed the spectators in an ocean of orange smooth textures moving and the unpredictability of the peacocks' movements. It created a womb-like structure for them to move freely around.

Another work of Ann Hamilton that features her experimentation with motion, atmosphere making, and self-activated installation art was *The event of a thread* (2011). It comprised a huge plateau where people could choose among two modalities of participation. They could either lay down and view the ever-changing shapes of a giant white drape waving above their heads or swing and initiate the movements of the white drape (that the others were watching). In a way, everybody was part of a greater system, either by witnessing others' operations or by causing an alteration to the situation. Hamilton's approach in this piece is group oriented and could introduce better the following performative installations *Waste-is-land* and *Sky-field*. Whereas *Seabed* remained anchored to a preliminary state of waking up one's body awareness, before action comes into play.



**Fig. 22** Hamilton A. (2011) The event of a thread [Installation] New York: Park Avenue Armory, Nov. 2011- Mar. 2012



**Fig. 23** Hamilton A. (1977) Mattering [Installation] Lyon: Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, 26 Nov. 1997- 6 Feb 1998

## 2.6 Conclusions

The evaluation of the feedback received from participants that have experienced *Seabed* led me to the following conclusions:

- 1) The installation as an environment overall succeeded in transferring an out of the ordinary experience to the participants: majority of them considered *Seabed*'s setting helpful in order to travel to a different time-space frame from their social mode. The responses considering time perception varied according to their experience of psychophysical training whereas they mostly reported a dilated sensation of time or a sudden acceleration of it.
- 2) The use of the music piece accompanying the experience offered a specific temporal frame: this acted as a reference point that enabled a discussion to flourish considering the duration of the event. All participants—with the exception of one person—stayed within the performative installation until the sound stopped (15 min). Most of them mentioned that the time frame was enjoyable and allowed them to go through different stages of experience. A small number of them commented that they would have stayed longer. In the next performative installation, I would challenge this choice of fixating a specific timeframe in order to offer the participants the freedom to shape their own experience of it.
- 3) 70 % of people experienced inactivity as an invitation to relax and drift away. Relaxation is a fundamental step in *Butoh* training but when a well-trained performer goes through this stage, it is never a complete abandonment: the researched outcome of the *Butoh-body* lingering in the space in complete syntony with its surroundings requires a degree of relaxation but at the same

time a certain alertness. A few people with experience in psychosomatic training had an almost immediate response of reaching a stage of compresence with their environment while staying connected with their inner sensations. One person mentioned that the setting reminded her of a Gong bath, a technique of healing meditation with sounds which in a way is an interesting comparison that makes apparent the prevalence of the sound in the whole experience.

- 4) The method of collecting the data was that of a written questionnaire: it was allowing me to collect enough information for the participant's experience but often it was more illuminating having an informal conversation with them afterwards. However, this informal chat was not documented. In *Seabed* I have opted not to use any audio-visual way of recording the experience because I wanted to protect the state of non-objectification in analogy to the absence of mirrors whenever *Butoh* dancers are training. (see before, Focal points of research) This choice was coherent with the line of the project and its philosophical components whereas it would have been beneficial for the data gathering process of the research to explore with different means of audio-visual documentation.

## Chapter 3

### ***Waste-is-land*, performative installation**

In this chapter, I will introduce and explain the context out of which I have created the second research installation piece of my project. The process of creation includes different stages of conceptual as well as craft-based shaping. This piece required the longest preparatory period because it involved materials that had undergone natural processes of growth and decay: I have been working with those two antithetic processes in order to inquire upon the concept of *Lifedeath* (Kasai 2000, p. 358)—which will be discussed in the description of the research project section. The materials used in the performative installation were a lilac tree, and a blend of decayed clothes mixed with coffee grounds and soil. As a consequence, time was necessary in order to produce a visible and concrete result of the transformation that had occurred. Therefore, *Waste-is-land*'s nature is archival in reference to the documentation of the different phases of the materials in situ; both plant and clothes were situated outdoors exposed to the changeable weather conditions that go beyond the control of the researcher.

### **3.1 Creation process of an experiential oriented install-action**

#### **3.1.1 Context of *Waste-is-land***

*Waste-is-land* is a research installation that primarily reflects my lived experience in Northern Ireland. The initial stimulus has been consequently shaped through external sources of inspiration, in particular T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste land* (1922). Within the research, the notion of *Butoh-body* acts as a catalyst of my

embodied experience shaping an approach towards various stimuli that form the practice in an intrinsic way. My lived experience as a foreigner in Ireland is here seen in relation to its specific temporal and spatial coordinates. This site-specific experience has a decisive influence on the research design and the final outcome. The “atmosphere” (Boehme, 1993) perceived in this historic moment in Northern Ireland, is that of a post-conflict site recovering from a tumultuous past. This period has been interpreted as a passage, or an open-ended process of becoming (Delanda, 1998).

In analogy, *Waste-is-Land* is inviting the participant to have an embodied experience of the processual nature of the past forming the present whilst, at the same time, anticipating the future. This was achieved with the engagement with relevant physical material that evoked time’s passing by. The approach resonates with the *Butoh-body* philosophical stance which takes into account the time that has been experienced by the body since birth (Iwana, 2002); if this concept is extended to the *corpus* (body) of a place—which in this case is Ireland—we may view the place incorporating its past. In this respect, seeing the body as a ‘vessel of time’ enables us to distinguish different layers into the same physical entity.

The theoretical framework of the approach would be closer to that of acknowledging immanence rather than transcendence. I will attempt to tease out those terms connecting them to Britta Bounty-Stadelmann’s discussion in his essay ‘Yuasa Yasuo’s Theory of Body’ (2006). He states that “for Yuasa, Descartes’ separation of mind and body” (which I am here comparing to *Lifedeath* as conceptual and material entity) “initiated a philosophical tradition in which mind (spirit) and body (matter) are opposed [...] two very different and seemingly incompatible systems of thought: idealism (in which mind is privileged over the body) and materialism (in which body is



privileged over the mind).” (Bounty-Stadelmann 2006, p. 293) Bounty-Stadelmann adds that Yuasa was interested in “Nishida’s elaboration of a theory of the body [...] indirectly stimulated by James and Bergson.” (Ibid, p. 29) Nishida’s concept of *Basho* has offered a theoretical grounding for the *Butoh-body* as mentioned in chapter 1: according to Bounty-Stadelmann, Yuasa demonstrates a familiar line of thought upon our bodily presence in the world and this reconnects his concepts to Nishida’s thoughts.

Hence, the discussion of Yuasa is reported here in order to shed light upon a phenomenological perspective upon the body interlinked to the *Butoh-body* notion in large. According to Bounty-Stadelmann, “Yuasa’s readings and observations led him to the idea of a “quasi-body system”; a kind of map that represents the link of shared space between mind and body, in which the mental or ‘energetic’ body crosses over into the physiological body.” (Ibid., p. 297) The author mentions that Yuasa drew on Asian traditions that accept experience and practical knowledge as the more efficient approach to understand reality. This point of view sees our direct involvement with the matter—our embodiment of a process—as the most valuable way to gain knowledge. Therefore, “from the ‘Eastern metaphysics of immanence perspective, individual, personalized experience is seen as authentic and sincere, and therefore meaningful and ‘true’. Transcendental or universal concepts, on the other hand, are seen as mere abstractions.” (Ibid., p. 298)

In *Waste-is-land*, I have been influenced by *The Waste Land* both in the choice of the materials and its potentiality to evoke an imagery to the participants. Therefore, this poem played a double folded role in the shaping of the research.

April is the cruellest month, breeding

Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing

Memory and desire, stirring

Dull roots with spring rain [...] (Eliot, 1922)

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot is addressing the period after the First World War in Europe. This particular fragment of Eliot is introducing the changes that occur in nature during the season's passage. Spring arrives and brings with it the rebirth of the dead earth. April is considered cruel because in order to breed there is the need of a radical action that re-generates what was lying inert. Eliot's "cruel April" is embracing the transformation of death to life. *Butoh-body* contemplates the coexistence of Life and death at the same moment. According to Nishida, *Basho* is the place of nothingness where time and space are always dynamic, ever-changing; thus, they die and live at the same instance. In comparison, for Deleuze: "Becoming is the pure movement evident in changes between particular events." (Parr 2010, p. 26) Parr comments that "rather than a product, final or interim, becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms and tending no particular goal or state [...] becoming is a non-linear dynamic process of change." (Ibid)

Eliot is spinning a web of evocative images and scenes; some of them very surrealistic and visceral, pointing to his historic moment. I drew a parallel between the content of the poem and the post-conflict situation in Northern Ireland, based on my personal reading of it. In analogy to the perception of wind that has acted as a triggering factor in the ideation and realization of *Seabed*, my status as a foreigner (coming from a country with a different historical, geographical—hence climatic—and political background) enabled me to be a—more or less detached—observer of the past and an indirect participator in the present. I hold a distant point of view that is in

a way different from the point of view of those carrying a body of memories related to the situation (the “Troubles”). Yet, sharing the unfolding present is affecting me and therefore, shapes my research. The term “affect” has been revisited by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988).

Laura Cull in her essay “Affect in Deleuze, Hijikata and Coates. The Politics of Becoming-Animal in performance” (2011) explains what affect is for Deleuze: “firstly Deleuze posits a distinction between affect and emotion based on their differing relations to the “self” [...] In the process of identification that Deleuze links to emotions, the subject enfolds the threatening outside into its own internal world [...] whereas affect acts upon the self like an arrow [...]” (Cull 2011, p.192) Secondly, Cull mentions that “affect is not a “thing” in Deleuze; rather, affect is the name given to a particular kind of “encounter” between bodies.” (Ibid) Thirdly, she notes that Deleuze’s affect draws from the term “affectus” which was defined by Spinoza as an ability to affect and be affected: “what a body can do, what is in its power, or what it is capable of in relation to other bodies. The affects or powers of a body are not fixed though [...]” (Ibid) therefore, affect relates to broader or more limited capacity to act whenever a body is encountering another body’s process of becoming. In this case affect refers to my own encounter with the the body of Ireland. Site-specificity is a fundamental aspect of the present experiential-based research leading to embodied knowledge.

### **3.2 Description of *Waste-is-land***

*Waste-is-land* was a performative installation that took place between 23-30 April at Glass Box in Belfast Campus. Glass Box is a transparent “box” in one of the external

corners of Ulster University, facing the street. Its surface dimensions are approximately 4m x 4m and it consists of 3 walls of glass and 1 background wall of wood. The space offers the unique possibility to connect both outside and inside. Participants could view the cityscape during the action, and they could also be seen by the passerbys that constituted their accidental audience. As a consequence, I have developed and refined the formal decisions of the research design according to the site-specific idiosyncrasy of Glass Box.

*Waste-is-land* addresses the concept of *Lifedeath* (Kasai 2000, p. 358), in both its a) visual symbolization and b) actualization;

a) The choice of the materials that acted as performative presences in the space has been influenced by the concept of *Lifedeath*. In particular, inside the installation area was a hanging pot with a lilac tree. Lilacs are mentioned by Eliot: "Lilacs out of the dead land [...]" (1922) The hanging pot was fixed at about 2m distance from the pavement allowing the participants to move around and beneath it. The tree would be an embodiment of life energy, here seen as growth process. Its displacement is related to the activation of the space (air) and the urge to evoke an out-of-the-ordinary experience; by placing the pot over the head of the participants, they faced a situation that undermined the usual perceptual linkage between the plant coming out of the earth and being located low in relation to their body. Hence, they were encouraged to adopt an uncommon body posture for a closed environment; facing up. We sometimes face up when we find ourselves exposed in open air, starring without purpose at the sky while this happens rarely within an urban setting unless we seek for some information in a panel above our heads. The hanging pot was fixed with a hook and was additionally supported

by stretched wires (in-between) that crossed the space. The wires had several small metallic knots on them. Furthermore, right under (ground) the hanging pot there was another bigger pot marking the middle of the pavement. At the back-left side of the space, there was an open suitcase with dimensions approx. 1m x 50cm. The suitcase contained a blend of soil, coffee grounds and a number of decaying clothes. The contents of the suitcase manifested traces of decay and deterioration. All the materials used in *Waste-is-land* were elements that incorporated transitional processes.

b) The actualization of the performative installation was designed as a task-orientated small group activity. Brian Connolly (1999) has coined the term Install-action in order to refer to similar activities where the bodily active participation of the audience is forming the installation space as part of their fruition. Connolly in his essay “The development of the performance art term: install-action”, remarks that “the term install-action has its historical roots [...] Alastair MacLennan and his working term/discipline of ‘Actuations’ [...] Really if I try to apply words to the idea/ concept of install-action, I should say it is a work in progress within a space or a place; a work that is done in a meaningful way or perhaps symbolic or ritual.” (Connolly 1999, p.2) Install-action could be seen as a branch of performative installation, where the audience is acting within the structure. Whereas performative installation would include also stillness or different ways of being within the space.

The participants were asked to book a place to different slots that were available during the week at evening times. Mostly, the groups were formed by 3 participants plus the researcher. I took part in all of the 9 iterations of *Waste-is-land* because I wanted to have a first-hand experience and be able

to observe the events phenomenologically. As the persons were arriving at the common appointment, I would hand the information sheet to them. I would explain that *Waste-is-land* was a shared task activity, to be performed in silence and I would ask them to act as a group. The suggested activity consisted of dividing the mixture of soil/ coffee grounds from the decaying clothes; transferring the dusty mixture to the empty pot and hanging the clothes from the wires that traversed the room. No specific time instructions and limitations were given. Once the 'task' was completed, the outcome was a sculptural composition which was left in the Glass Box until the next group session was scheduled. I therefore cleaned and re-ordered the space 8 times. I am perceiving the very moment of re-assessment of the space as an undoing of what was done/ created beforehand. Thus, this multi-faceted cyclical activity is the direct embodiment of *Lifedeath*.

### **3.3 Documentation of the crafting process: an archive of events**

The materials (living processes) that I have been engaging with in this part of the research (a lilac tree and a number of decaying clothes) have been situated in an open-air yard. I transplanted the lilac on April 2017 and since then I have been observing and documenting its process of growth and assimilation within changing environments for one year. On October 2017, the lilac tree was moved onto another open-air site and was moved again in two months' time. The travelling experiences of the lilac was bound to my own and paralleled my change of houses and cities. The lilac was affected by my decision-making as the soil, amount of sunlight and its

environment were modified consequently. Decaying clothes have been placed outside in order to be subject to the weather interferences on February 2017 and have been recollected on December 2017 because the state of decay they had undergone was sufficient to create an evocative imagery without losing their tissue completely. Decaying clothes embodied the process of dissolution: they were melting into their environment as they received plenty of water throughout ten months and they became food for the plants that grew freely in the yard. Both lilac tree and decaying clothes were materials produced out of this temporal and spatial circumstances that Northern Ireland provided. Their growing process and outcome are strictly bound to a historical moment as well, since pollution affects levels of humidity in the air.

Deleuze, in the Introduction of *A Thousand Plateaus*, develops the concept of Rhizome where he refers to “the wisdom of the plants that even when they have roots, there is always an outside where they form a Rhizome with something else—with the wind, an animal, human beings...” (Deleuze 1980, p.11)...and perhaps decaying clothes? The following photos constitute an archive that documents the different formulations and relationships that have been enabled by locating the decaying clothes to a natural environment. I am reflecting upon the openness of the *Butoh-body* to co-form its environment while being open to be shaped by it. This living relationship is formally depicted upon the clothes and the lilac tree as they interact with their context and the changing circumstances in which they are located each time forming new ensembles (Rhizomes).



**Fig. 24** Lilac tree transplantation (April 2017)





**Fig. 25** Lilac tree within wild grass (May 2017)





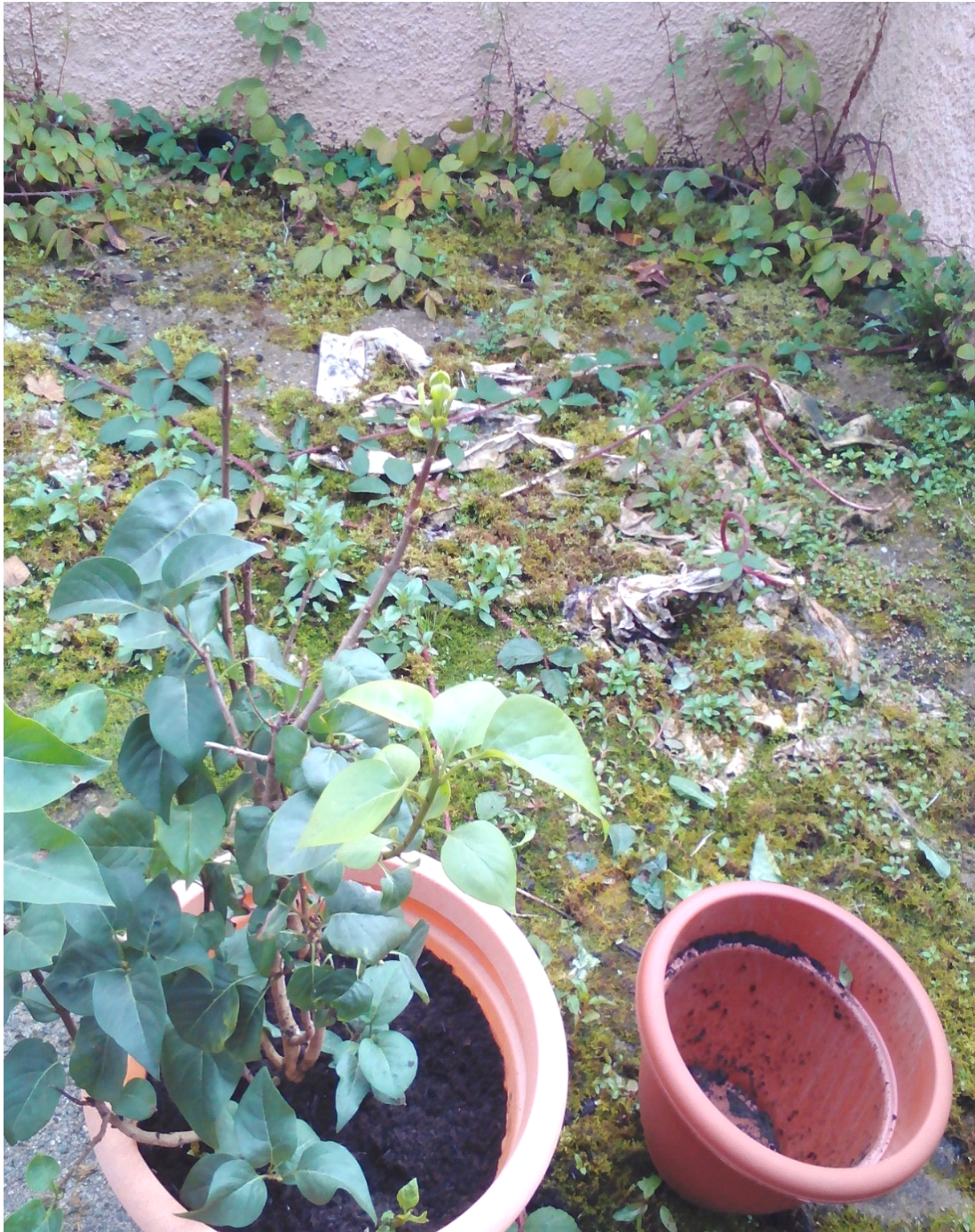
**Fig. 26** Lilac tree, in a neater background (June 2017)





**Fig. 27** Lilac tree: growing, moving and changing “home” (October 2017)





**Fig. 28** Lilac tree with the decaying clothes in situ (October 2017)





**Fig. 29** Lilac tree; winter is getting colder (November 2017)





**Fig. 30** (left) Lilac tree in its temporary habitat (December 2017)

**Fig. 31** (right) Lilac tree, new “home” again (March 2018)



**Fig. 32** Decaying clothes covered manually by moss (March 2017)





**Fig. 33** Decaying clothes melding with weeds (July 2017)



**Fig. 34** Decaying clothes in synergy with their living environment (October 2017)





**Fig. 35** Decaying clothes in amalgamation with the weeds (November 2017)



**Fig. 36** Decaying clothes form a hosting structure for the weeds (December 2017)



### 3.3.1 Documentation of the installation process

The installation of *Waste-is-land* consisted of fixing crossing wires in the space in order to accommodate the hanging pot of the lilac tree from the ceiling. The rest of the material involved in the piece was positioned in the floor in a way that encouraged the participants to move around freely and effectively.



**Fig. 37 & 38** Lilac tree in the exhibition space in a technical trial for its weight.



**Fig. 39 & 40** Additional wires that support and stabilize the hanging pot in the centre

### **3.4 Discussion of focal points and how they have shaped my research design**

The core research question of my practice-based research is whether and how the *Butoh-body* notion enhances immersion in performative installation practices. Drawing from the modalities with which *Butoh* approaches and understands the body within its environment, I am modelling the participants' experience within a pre-set installation art space. Therefore, the researched topic concerns participants' relationship with the given space as it is shaped throughout a suggested activity that enacts and constitutes the performative installation. This relationship also referred as *Butoh-tai* (this term is encountered in chapter 1) is being examined here under the lens of immersivity. In this section, I am trying to break down the term 'immersion', an experience that is characterised by the quality of immersivity. I will identify the

separate characteristics/ aspects that circumscribe it in order to render this research measurable and testable.

### **3.4.1 *Locating Waste-is-land: building a network among bodies and cityscape***

As described before, the particularity of Glass Box was that of a space that provided a double vision (seeing and being seen) while at the same time remained a well-defined and protected space to work. As opposed to choosing any other space inside the building, I opted for this room that is relatively small in dimensions in order to ensure an intimate engagement with the artwork and, at the same time, an exposure to the cityscape. The discrete and isolated nature of the space allowed the participants to be fully focused on the experience and kept distant any distraction of the everyday flow within the institution.

Elizabeth Grosz is remarking that “the body itself may be regarded as the locus and site of inscription for specific modes of subjectivity” (Grosz 1998, p. 241) and points out that “there is a constitutive and mutually defining relation between bodies and cities.” (Ibid, p. 242) In her analysis of cities and bodies, an ecological multi-perspective and non-causal reading emerges. She explains that, by city, she understands “a complex and interactive network which links together, often an unintegrated and de facto way, a number of disparate social activities, processes and relations, with a number of imaginary and real, projected or actual architectural, geographic, civic and public relations.” (Ibid, p. 244) Therefore, her approach on the relation created among bodies and cities is defined as a dynamic assemblage or collection of parts that form linkages. Likewise, *Waste-is-land* is attempting to create

a net among the material and the participants' subjectivities staging their potentiality to interrelate in an open-ended way. Another interesting concept that Grosz brings forth is that of the "traces left on the subject's corporeality" if we see the city as "an active force that constitutes bodies." (Ibid, p. 250). My understanding is that those traces reported by Grosz are not always visible, since traces are visible when materiality comes into play. In *Waste-is-land* some traces were visible—growing plant—others possible to touch and affect us directly—our hands got dirty when handling decaying clothes. However, in the previous quote, Grosz is alluding to the incorporeal effects that, in relation to their invisible nature, could be compared to immersion which refers to a tacit experiential mode of perception.

### **3.4.2 Arguing about the centrality of the body in *Waste-is-land***

*Waste-is-land* is a performative installation shaped by the participant's bodily interaction with it. Phenomenology ascribes a crucial role to the body having as its main theorists Merleau-Ponty in Europe and Kyoto school's founder Kitaro Nishida, in Japan. I would like to explicate their points of view upon the body in order to shed more light on the motivation that stands behind of my choice of placing the participant's body at the core of my research.

Cathryn Vasselen, in her book *Textures of Light, Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty*, states that "Merleau-Ponty's account of vision is anti-Platonic. It inhabits a space which is tactile as well as visual [...] he does not subordinate vision to other senses." (Vasseleu 1998, p. 41) I reckon that the term Platonic is used by Vasseleu in order to mark a conceptual reading of reality. A

Platonic approach would be attempting to fit lived experience into pre-fixed categoric forms (idealism) instead of allowing the shaping one's knowledge in an embodied manner (anti-Platonic). This later embodied- based knowledge making is characterizing the current research that places the body in its core.

Nowadays, vision is often given a primacy especially within new media technologies that engage us mostly with screen-based modes of display. On the contrary, for Merleau-Ponty, "the body is a locus of intentionality that is essential to all conscious experience [...] perception is a creative receptivity rather than a passive capacity to receive impressions. This creativity is inseparable from its corporeality." (Ibid, p. 21 and 24) Similarly, Nishida, is often describing body's receptivity with the term "Acting intuition" and puts forth a "dialectical view of our embodied existence which bears a striking resemblance to Merleau-Ponty's notion of bodily chiasm." (Kazashi 1999, p.4) Both philosophers draw our attention to the body as perceptual motor and seat of our experience.

Merleau-Ponty's "chiasmatic body", mentioned also by Zarrilli (1998), has to be introduced by the term "flesh, which is a term for the prototypical structure of all subject-object relations [...] interplay between the two hands [...] touching and tangible." (Vasseleu 1998, p. 26) Vasseleu remarks that "living flesh is the modality of the body-inscribed within sensibility [...] inextricable from its inhabiting the world [...] the body is therefore a hinge." (Ibid, p. 27) Therefore, we could reassume that Merleau-Ponty's term reversibility refers to the double status of the body as a perceiver and perceived. Hence, "chiasm is the name that is given to the motion of perceptual dehiscence, in which perception is understood as a being in momentum." (Ibid, p. 30) Here, the use of the word momentum does not refer necessarily to a

movement that is externally tracked but to the internal changing state of the body in-the-world flux.

In addition, Merleau-Ponty, refers to the fact that among bodies, a kind of intrinsic alliance is developed since “the concordant operations of the other’s body and my own are one intercorporeal being, which supports a perceptual faith in a common world.”(Ibid, p. 31) Working in small groups in *Waste-is-land* preserves and cultivates this bond among participants who are asked to engage among each other and act as one organism. Merleau-Ponty supports body’s chiasmic modality upon the physiology of the human body, in particular by reference to the “optic chiasma which is the point of cross-over of the fibres of the two optic nerves, so that the shared visual field of each eye is linked to a part of the brain on the opposite side of the body.” (Ibid, p.31) Therefore, chiasma is not an addition of two or more points of view but a way of existence that occurs in between them in a continuous momentum. This term that refers to the synergy of time-space coordinates of the body in action. In this respect, chiasma is referring to “a folding of opposites together so that they are mutually reversed.” (Ibid, p. 33) This could be described as the mutual interrelation that foments the bond between the body and its surroundings in *Butoh*.

*Butoh-body* is dealing with the coexistence of the opposites, which is also a core subject in the work of Beuys and MacLennan. I will refer more extensively to this fact in the section about practitioners’ work that resonates to *Waste-is-land*. Also, Clark’s work is incorporating the presence of an audience that interferes and co-forms, either actively or not, the creation process. For Merleau-Ponty, “the intrusion on another whose perceptual field will never be identical to one’s own is not a radical contestation of existence by another but means that the structure of all aspects of human existence must remain ambiguous in their determination and be experienced

as open to alteration.” (Ibid, p. 36) As Brian Onishi (2014) suggests, it is this ambiguity that opens up space for wonder and creativity.

### **3.4.3 ‘Chiasmic’ body’s relation to its contemporary debates**

Phenomenological approaches of the body based on the negation of subject-object dualism constituted a melting pot of Japanese and European ideas often overlapping or complementing each other: William James anticipates Merleau-Ponty’s idea of the inherent ambiguity of the chiasmic body in his *Essays on Radical Empiricism* remarking that “our body is the palmary instance of the ambiguous.” (James 1967, p.153 quoted by Kazashi 1999, p.3) Kazashi explains that Nishida had already encountered James’s philosophy under Buddhist illumination, and he attempted to provide “the Jamesian notion of pure experience with socio-historical dimensions.” (Ibid, p.2) However, whereas James’s view “seems to have stopped short of comprehending the reflexive role the body plays in our pre-reflective relation with the world [...] this has been highlighted by the later Merleau-Ponty under the name of the bodily chiasm.” (Ibid, p.4) Hence, Merleau-Ponty shed light upon the modalities with which the bodily chiasm occurs offering a map of the phenomenon.

Kazashi notes that Nishida is underlying that historical bodies are acting-intuitional (in reference to Nishida’s concept of “Acting-intuition” (1987) which has been introduced in chapter 1) and our self-awareness of it is self-contradictory. Nishida’s assumption of a self-contradictory being is based on the realization that our body is also a thing; it is what sees at the same that it is what works. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty (1972) in *Eye and Mind*, names this modality of bodily textures as chiasmic

introducing us to the “flesh of the world.” This latter term, is almost overlapping with the Nishida’s concept of *Basho* (the place) which is interrelated with art-making: “The world becomes the self’s body [...] *Basho* is self-determining [...] As the artist constructs a work which he himself, cannot know, so we proceed to construct history too.” (Nishida 1953-55, p. 341-2 quoted by Kazashi 1999, p. 4) Both Nishida and Merleau-Ponty refer to this bond between the world and the body, the artwork and the maker pointing to its interchangeable and highly receptive nature.

Arthur Danto, in his book *The Body Problem*, is attempting to unravel Descartes’s philosophical approach upon the soul-body problem: “Descartes is commonly thought to have supposed true a version of Psychological Irreducibilism which depends upon a dualism of minds and bodies.” (Danto 1999, p. 192) Danto adds that “in the Sixth Meditation, Descartes tells us that the mind is not in the body the way a pilot is in a ship.” (Ibid, p. 194) Finally arguing that “when my body is wounded, I feel pain, but when the ship is stove, the pilot perceives by sight that it is broken [...] In brief, pilots know what is true of their ships by inference from evidence and observation whereas we know certain things at least about what takes place in our bodies non-inferentially and directly.” (Ibid, p. 195) Danto concludes that a pilot would not become aware of the ship’s damage if not by observation, whereas our knowledge is embodied.

While Merleau-Ponty and Nishida ponder on the unfolding and contextual nature (momentum) of the flesh of the world or *Basho*, Bennett offers a pile of garbage as an example of the New materialism’s affinity: “When various pieces of trash interact with each other, they become more than those individual pieces. They form an assemblage that produces consequences unforeseen and unintended by any human agent that placed them together [...] they are able of a weak self-organization.”



(Onishi 2014, p.3) In the other hand, Graham Harman, often used as the theoretical framework of Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) debates, claims that “if I perceive a tree, it can probably perceive me in turn.” (Harman 2011 quoted by Onishi 1999, p.5) Finally, Onishi concludes that for Harman, “there are no subjects, only objects with varying capacities to relate to other objects via their qualities. In this sense, OOO promotes wonder as a fundamental mode of engagement with the world.” (Ibid) The notion of embedded knowledge, as it has been questioned and revisited by different schools of thought—illustrated here—is opening different ways of research design with the art, placing the spectator’s body at its core. This thesis is arguing that immersion—which is here defined and understood as a psychophysical phenomenon—is achieved throughout a bodily-focused research design using *Butoh* as its primal toolkit.

#### **3.4.4 *Defining immersion: Zen modalities of handling material in ‘liminoid’ activities***

Immersion is a term broadly used nowadays in contemporary theatre, music and performative art practices. In the current research, I am testing whether immersivity is enhanced by the *Butoh-body* notion. Therefore, immersion is hereby understood as a state of presence where “the maker is marked by the made.” (Fung 2012, p.2) In this extract Fung describes in depth the difference between the Aristotelian way of perceiving doing (*poiesis*) and making (*praxis*) in relation to Nishida’s “Acting intuition” that comprises both of them (for him, doing and making happen at the same time). This thought is quite representative of the Japanese philosophical

tradition of Kyoto School that overcomes dualism and moves toward a “merged reality” between the subject and the object.

The open-ended, task-oriented experience of *Waste-is-land* involved a tactile engagement with the material. The aim here was to seek a different connection with the soil and the decaying clothes that goes beyond a functional and purpose-based handling. The current methodology of examining this process was based on my observation of the participant's presence in the space and their written feedback that reported their experience. “Acting intuition”—as a concept that features action in synergy with one’s environment instead of acting upon it—is crucial here in order to shed light in the specific modality of interrelation with the installation that I am working with. This becomes clearer when compared to the third research installation *Sky-field*, where the participants have been given a goal-oriented task which had interfered in their openness towards being creative (see chapter 4 Data analysis of participants’ feedback after *Sky-field*, p. 208).

In addition to “Acting intuition”, the concept of liminal and liminoid is standing at the core of a definition of immersion in my research. Esposito is quoting Victor Turner attempting to explain liminality in *Butoh*: “The liminal stage is a state of transition that occurs ‘betwixt and between’ two normative states of the social order, for example in changes of social status or seasonal cycle.” (Turner 1969, 1982 quoted by Esposito 2013, p. 28) She explains that “transitional or liminal stages are characterized by ritual symbolism that suggests erasure, ambiguity and paradox.” (Ibid) The above-mentioned characteristics are here brought into conversation with *Butoh* dance aspects that is often characterized by a mixture of grotesque and darkness. “Turner sees the ludic as the core of liminality which he defines as a seedbed of creativity.” (Ibid) *Waste-is-land*’s ludic nature was that of a situation that allows and encourages

playfulness. This was carefully cultivated by consciously avoiding imposing specific rules with which participants had to interact with the installation. Allowing a loose frame for subjective interpretation of the given task together with the lack of a constraining time frame enabled participants' playfulness to flourish.

In Turner's view, liminal is seen in close relation to ritual activities existing mostly in traditionally formed social communities. The term traditional social community—in contrast to a modern society—refers to the historical period before industrialization and urbanization where members of the society constituted communities that survived based on sharing and collaboration principles. Esposito's unravelling of *Butoh's* theoretical and historical grounding incorporates Turner's term liminoid by locating it chronologically close to the development of modern societies as follows: "whereas in simple societies liminality is integral to the consolidation of the normative social order, in complex societies the liminal is marginalized to the leisure modalities of sport, art, drama and literature...Turner uses the term liminoid to refer to this latter configuration of the liminal." (Turner 1982, p. 52 quoted *ibid* p.40) Turner's theory has been used by Schechner (1988) in the development of performance studies theory. Schechner compares the relationship between term liminal and liminoid to 'ritual' and 'aesthetic' performance. He argues that the difference between those states is in the degree and the nature of transformation that they invite into the participants. As Esposito remarks, "performance theory has brought into the fore the fact that ritual and aesthetic performances draw on techniques of altered states of consciousness." (*Ibid*, p. 46) This essential factor is drawn from Schechner in order to differentiate entertainment from artwork in modern societies. Elements of theories upon altered states of consciousness will be further elaborated in chapter 4 in reference to performative installation.

Catharine Crystof, in her book *Rethinking religion in the theatre of Grotowski* (2017), mentions that actor Zygmunt Molik and theatre scholar Giuliano Campo “describe the performer’s loss of ego” which in Grotowski’s word would be referred to as “transparent consciousness.” (Crystof 2017, p.147) According to Crystof, Grotowski defines this state of presence as light or healthy trance state: “a healthy trance means that performers are alert, actively aware and able to perceive outer and inner states simultaneously without being attached to with either state.” (Ibid) *Waste-is-land* is a performative installation that invites a liminoid presence of the participants which varies according to their psychophysical openness. The pace, materiality, location and aesthetics of this performative installation are informing a rite of passage where *Lifedeath* concept is embodied and transitional states are becoming the focus. The rite of passage entails a process of handling organic material such as soil and decaying clothes with the aim of enacting the embodiment of *Lifedeath* without entering into its representation: “The dismantling of the link between signifier and signified—between gesture or set of gestures and meaning—makes *Butoh* anti-representational as well as liminal.” (Ibid, p. 268) Esposito points out that in liminality, we are playing with what is known to us in a process of de-familiarization. This happens in a performative installation that incorporates objects of our everyday life and encourages us to experiment with a different relation to it. *Waste-is-land* opens up a space where life and coexists with its dissolution and creates an amalgam of both under the form of an artwork to which participants are asked to contribute and activate with their actions.

Helena Kantikonski, in her BA thesis, *Non-performing. Liminality and embodiment in Butoh Dance* is referring to James Loxley’s book *Performativity*: “As Loxley (2007) points out, both Kirby and Artaud were interested in the possibilities of performance

where there are no representations, instead actions are just allowed to be themselves.” (Kantikonski 2017, p. 15) This occurs when the participants are asked to do an action but not to perform and reconnects to Happenings as a contemporary form of art practice. Loxley mentions that “Kaprow began to stage what became known as Happenings, events or performances in which the staples of theatre, such as narrative, character, setting and a boundary between playing space and audience where all abandoned.” (Loxley 2007, p.147) Hence, in Kaprow’s Happenings, “the body was left to signify what it does in everyday life or more; to reveal a corporeal, psychic reality that is often concealed in the everyday.” (Kantikonski 2017, p. 15) Staging an everyday practice enables a window or a magnifying lens upon the body. This focus and enlargement of the components of everydayness, in a way allows the audience to reflect upon their existential and social modalities of being and ultimately encourages a liminoid experience.

Furthermore, Kantikonski builds an interesting connection between Zen practice and performativity that is here useful to return to the notion of Butoh-body which sees its foundation to a traditional Japanese life approach. She explains that “performativity is no news to Zen teachers and practitioners around the world, especially to those working on kōans [...] the students are told to answer the kōan by becoming one with it [...] the separation between subject and object is broken.” (Ibid, p. 19) A kōan is a paradox to be meditated upon that is used to train Zen Buddhist monks to abandon ultimate dependence on reason and to force them into gaining sudden intuitive enlightenment (Satori) Dai Z. Suzuki in the book *Zen Koan as a Means for Attaining Enlightenment* (Suzuki 2011 p.6) explains that “the universal koan is compressed in a nutshell into every one of the ‘seventeen hundred koans’ and when it is understood in a most thoroughgoing way the greatest one will also yield

up its secrets.” He adds that Satori (enlightenment) is not “a state of mere quietude, it is not tranquillization, it is an inner experience which has noetic quality.” (Ibid, p. 14) The concept of Satori marks a degree of awakening from our ordinary form of experience. In addition, the concept of kōan, resonates with that of Butoh-fu (the Butoh score given to the Butoh-ka (dancers) which has been analysed in chapter 1). Both kōan and Butoh-fu ask for a non-rational engagement for their interpretation, hence they constitute a call for an interpretation that is entailed via the embodiment of an experience.

Kantikonski adds that Loxley’s assumption that liminality as an aspect of performative practices “is corroding any difference from the actual and the settled, comes close to a Buddhist understanding.” (Ibid, p. 24) The term performativity of embodiment comes again into play when introduced by Poromaa Roshi. Roshi gives the example of a “cat which does not perform but is being a cat” (Ibid, p. 35) and ultimately pointing out that there is however a paradox here: “how does one just do something?” (Ibid, p.37) A non-performer state is evoked in *Waste-is-land* as a prerequisite and hopefully overlapping with the nature of immersivity. This state goes beyond personal conditioning since “in a way, the social, cultural and personal conditioning is actually ‘performing’ an imaginary identity.” (Ibid, p.37) However, *Waste-is-land* is only creating a gate of access to this state of “transparent consciousness” (Crystof 2017, p. 147) since the institutional context of the research installation is interfering with the research process.

The later conclusion emerges clearer in *Sky-field 2* (chapter 4), where the researcher has observed her tendency to control participants’ behaviour. Different aspects of the site-specificity within an institutional environment—in this case Ulster University— influence and shape participants’ experience. For example, the building’s premises

are quite limited in terms of offering an alternative way of moving in the space in comparison with what a natural site or an arts studio would have been offering. Besides, the codes of behaviour within the performative installation are determined by the professional position of participants within an institution and the established normative relationship among each other which cannot easily be challenged creatively within the same site. In addition, Waste-is-land participants were aware to be seen from an accidental audience of passer-by which added another level of censorship. Lastly, the duration of the experience plays a fundamental role in relation to allowing a deeper level of engagement and this will be argued mainly in chapter 5.

#### **3.4.5 Activating the peripheral perception of the participants**

Peripheral perception occurs when the direct and vertical “western eye view”—this term according to Kasai (2003) refers to the modality with which we interact among each other socially by facing in an imaginary straight line towards the horizon—is abandoned. In the case of peripheral vision, we consciously adopt a more diffused and less focused eye-view, approaching the Japanese social conventions of eye contact. Kasai in his article *Perception in Butoh Dance* notes that “the term ‘perception’ applies not merely to the visual, even when we use sight metaphorically.” (Kasai 2003, p. 257) Kasai maintains that

People from Western cultures tend to hold or maintain eye contact longer than most Japanese. For the typical Westerner, this might be done to establish trust, and to convey respect for the speaker; relatively brief eye contact may arouse

mistrust or fail to communicate proper respect. To the typical Japanese, however, a direct, extended gaze might convey disrespect, or invoke a challenge. (Ibid, p.260)

Kasai reflects that this may be a phenomenon distinguishable from the ways in which each culture 'sees' the relationship between perceiver and perceived suggesting that "there is a connection between each culture's physical gaze as related to the cultural/philosophical orientation, though perhaps not a clear-cut equivalence." (Ibid) Kasai's reflection ascribes to the research design of peripheral vision throughout the performative installation a clear importance.

In addition, I recall Masaki Iwana persistently correcting my eye view during the seminar I attended (Athens, 2018). He would insist that performer's gaze should not be direct and intense; otherwise the audience will not be able to fully grasp the whole body's presence. Iwana's instructions was for an open but not focused gaze. This gaze should be directed towards the imaginary line of the audience while skimming the rest of the room at the same time. This modality of eye view activated a multi-layered attention towards my surroundings which were perceived in a roundish shape, engulfing my body. I gradually started to experience my "body as an eye or a body full of eyes." (Zarrilli 1998, p. 213) Zarilli's definition points to a body that is active and open to external stimuli; in a similar way that our eyes are constantly receiving the reflection of light upon other bodies (human and non-human) hence, accumulating information about the physical reality that surrounds us.

In analogy to the above described experience in Iwana's seminar, *Waste-is-land's* research design pays attention to the composition of the parts of the installation in the way that they embrace the body and to the choreography—the compresence of



other bodies in the space. In particular, placing the open suitcase in the floor, has encouraged the participants to bend in order to collect the blend of soil with coffee grounds. Subsequently, they had to move within the space in order to transfer part of it inside the big pot which was placed in the centre of the room and reach up high to hang the decaying clothes to the crossing wires traversing the air above average human level height. The crossing wires were weaving trajectories in a part of the space that is not normally used in a function-oriented designed environment. This choice encouraged an alternative sensing of the space as a potential container of material, therefore not being empty: participants' attention has shifted from what is habitually perceived as the void to a vivid living area.

The arrangement of the material in the space was determined by the attempt to invoke the embodiment of the farmer's body. Hijikata, the co-founder of *Butoh*, has been inspired the transfigured shapes of the dancing body from his memories of farmer's posture (*ganimata*, literally meaning bent legs) collecting rice in his native land: "It was the marginal land known as Tohoku, which remained an obsession throughout Hijikata's life." (Barber 2005, p.9) What emerged from the given task in *Waste-is-land* was a movement cyclically repeated which was occurring in between the ground and the air. Participants were carrying the weight of the soil and sensing the fragility of the decaying clothes, therefore receiving a range of tactile stimuli. Similarly, in the *Butoh-body*, we often encounter a coexistence of different qualities within the regions of the body; Contortion—physically and conceptually—is part of *Butoh* aesthetics that often arises visually; *Lifedeath* is the concept that stands behind them.

As a result, the peripheral vision was triggered in two ways: *Waste-is-land* participants were asked to rearrange the material in the space while moving among

other bodies. I have been testing whether the audience's peripheral perception was activated through my observation (see later in Research positionality, participant observation has been used a research method of analysing data): I am considering the way that the participants were moving inside a limited space, balancing between different paces of movement (often among a number of unknown persons) and acting without bumping to each other or causing any damage to the structure.

The above-discussed concepts with regards to *Butoh-body* notion could become more straightforward to connect with *Waste-is-land* if mentioning its *modus operandi*. Hence, I am relating to the *Butoh-body* regarding its potentiality to operate as a shifter of perception. Kasai examines a series of factors that enable the *Butoh* performers to activate “an alternative perceptive state” as they perform (Ibid). One of the factors mentioned is the peripheral perception that enhances a sense of inclusion between the body and its surroundings.

In *Waste-is-land*, the research design of the performative installation was developed around the element of spatial awareness. Tasks-actions given involved handling of materials that were located and distributed through the space. Tasks-actions were often overlapping in time and require self- organization within a set of rules. In this way, the participant was invited to be alert to different sides of their body and to abandon the ordinary eye-view direction. *Waste-is-land* is investigating the body's potentiality to realize and co-form the infinitely dynamic space (*Basho*).

#### **3.4.6 *Body time, duration of the experience and timelessness as factors of immersion***

In *Waste-is-land*, the participants were given a set of instructions about how to inhabit the space. The guidelines referred to an open-ended task without defining any specific timeframe to its completion. Attention was paid to the amount of information that was passed to the participants prior to their engagement with the artwork: enough to give a rough idea but not entering into too much detail in order to avoid the tendency of foreseeing and pre-setting one's experience.

During the opening (that occurred two days before *Waste-is-land* was actuated), the aims and means of the research project were briefly introduced and participants have been invited to book a place in order to take part in some activities within the performative installation. Hence, apart from a generic description of activities, when booking a place, participants would not know what will happen exactly. This deliberate choice was meant to maintain a level of surprise, thus absence of control prior to their engagement. I have opted for this way of approaching them because I estimated that it is crucial to preserve the "freshness" of the event, therefore its effect: without communicating specific details of what would occur during the performative installation, the participants were prevented from arriving with a preconceived idea of behaviour. In a way, this factor of research design enabled them to be focused in the present moment and act in a spontaneous way.

The lack of participants' awareness of all the details in *Waste-is-land* allowed a degree of spontaneity in their reactions. Jennifer Lavy mentions that for Grotowski spontaneity is cultivated through the preservation of performers' impulse as a gate towards an "authentic encounter." (Lavy 2005, p. 184) Lavy comments that in Grotowski's terms "*conjunctio oppositorum* is also critical for dealing with the relationship between spontaneity and formal technique in his theatre." (Ibid, p.179)

Lavy is quoting Grotowski's response to Margaret Croyden (1969) in reference to the double bound between spontaneity and structure:

A great work is an expression of contradiction, of opposites. Discipline is obtained through spontaneity, but it always remains a discipline. Spontaneity is curbed by discipline, and yet there is always spontaneity. These two opposites curb and stimulate each other and give radiance to the action. (Lavy 2005, p.184)

It appears clear that there is a necessity to offer a framework but without fixating any single detail in order to allow for a response, a living action to emerge within a performative installation. Another factor that I am inquiring into is in which way the duration of the experience enhances the immersive effect to the audience. Feedback data analysis revealed that the majority of participants would have remained inside the performative installation longer—if not prompted to leave—as a natural consequence of their experiential flow. In addition, my observation was that the groups mostly began to be more creative, inventive and playful once the task was completed. I have been considering that the longer the presence inside the space and the absence of setting a fixed timeframe, the deeper the effect upon the participant might be. This consideration stems from my embodied experience during *Butoh* training sessions: my self-observation was that in order to go through different states of presence, time was a significant factor in the transformation process. Another aspect of immersion as it is perceived in this research framework, is a sensation of dwelling into the moment of the experience or an expansion of the time perception. According to the written feedback, the majority of the participants described a sensation of slowing down initially and speeding up consequently as the

action began to form itself as a pattern. They reported this sensation as being inside a "bubble" in relation to the external environment.

Kasai (2003) remarks that a crucial element in *Butoh* perception is reaching the so-called 'body time' instead of the 'social time'. When we abandon the restrictions given by our social imperatives, we discover an immense world of creativity hidden under the surface of the everydayness. We might figure the 'social time' as a surface or skin of a lake whereas the 'body time' would be much richer and profound as the lake's depths. (Ibid 2003, p.262) This performative installation is questioning whether an aesthetic experience, which is here seen as marking an out-of-the-ordinary time-space, would enhance the emergence of 'body time' and foster creativity. *Waste-is-land* incorporates a series of actions/processes of relating with the materials. This fact, guides participants' attention to their inner 'body time' since they are not involved by a detached observation but by directly experiencing the performer's state.

### **3.4.7 The importance of feet and knees**

The contemporary theatre director, writer and philosopher Tadashi Suzuki in his book *The ways of acting* (1986), highlights the way in which the actor's feet are used as being the fundament of a stage performance. He remarks that "even the movement of the arms and the hands can only augment the feeling inherent in the body positions established by the feet." (Suzuki 1986, p.6) Similarly, the research design to date—of *Seabed* and *Waste-is-land*—has considered the direct contact of

participants' feet with the ground. In both cases, people were asked to take their shoes off and participate either with socks on or bare feet.

Suzuki explains that "the actor composes himself on the basis of his sense of contact with the ground, by the way in which his body makes contact with the floor." (Ibid, p. 8) He comments that since Japan's modern theatre has been gradually westernized, actors had to wear shoes, and as a consequence they 'lost their feet.' (Ibid, p. 7) Moreover, Suzuki refers to the fact that also for Greeks if we look back to ancient tragedy staging, "the image of the knee did not suggest worship of the Gods on Mount Olympus [...] but to pay homage to the gods in the underworld." (Ibid, p. 10) He therefore suggests that our feet represent the ultimate means of connection between mankind and earth. As seen in chapter 1, *Butoh*'s semantics refer to the action of stamping the earth; hence performers' direct contact with the floor appears to have a crucial impact over the whole performance.

According to Suzuki, the development and industrialization of our contemporary living and working spaces has discharged wooden hallways and passageways in an attempt to seek functionality and operativity. Therefore, "we have forgotten that mankind is one of the animals." (Ibid, p. 21) *Butoh*, as a conceptual descendent of traditional forms of Japanese performing arts, strives for this balance between height and depth, sky and earth." (Ibid, p. 10) Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese in the book *The Secret Art of the Performer* (1991) point out that "all the principles of extraordinary technique [...] can be found in Balinese performer's basic foot position." (Barba and Savarese 1991, p.120) They comment that "the foot exemplifies a particular type of life, as if in a microcosm" and note that life can be constructed or shaped by "means of a new acculturation of the foot." (Ibid) Barba and Savarese state that our feet position do determine the tone and posture of the whole body. This occurs

because the anatomy of the human body is structured in such a way that every single movement reflects a kind of “muscular eco to all the other parts.” (Ibid, p.121) *Waste-is-land* did not offer a specific guidance in how to use one’s feet in order to align one’s posture but acted as a stimulus of sensory reconnection to the ground via the exposure of body’s extremities.

*Waste-is-land*, would like to evoke the embodiment of *Butoh-body* and encourage a direct relation to this elemental state of the body to the spectator. In conclusion, apart from being a requisite in order to ground oneself in a more sensorial sensitive way, this was also an immediate request to the participants to reveal part of their body which would normally be hidden in a social interaction (feet). The action of offering in public site, with their feet out of their shoes, was leading them to sense in a more intimate way their surroundings, adding to the extra-ordinariness of the experience.

#### **3.4.8 Transitional nature of the material as embodiment of Lifedeath**

The materials used in *Waste-is-land* were of organic nature (lilac tree, soil, coffee grounds, and decaying clothes); therefore, they have undergone changes during the process because of their inherent receptivity and malleability degrees in relation to the external factors. The soil gradually became drier because of its exposure to the heated pavement within Glass box. The lack of moisture affected also the strength of the smell emanated. Hence, the participants’ tactile and olfactory experience has been modified day by day. The warmth of the soil was additionally varying according to the time of the day and the resultant daylight exposure; the first daily group

session that was taking place at 5:30pm experienced a warmer sensation than the second (which was running at 7pm) because the sun was heating further the content of the gallery space.

Yusoff mentions that for Grosz, “art is the materialization of imperceptible cosmic, biological and geological forces of the universe on the body sensations that allow our becoming otherwise.” (2012, p. 973) This would be an appropriate reading of *Waste-is-land* which is pointing to both the signifier and the signified of the materials used. That is, materials are chosen for their symbolization and their materiality. Similarly, as “Grosz’s work alerts us to that which precedes and exceeds relations [...] often latent or anterior to them”, (Ibid p. 974) what we see within the performative installation is a call to interpret things in multiple layers.

Grosz’s point of view upon multi-fold existence of materials is further quoted by Yusoff as follows: “The earth, the world, the universe is made up not only of objects but above all of forces, forces that interact [...] zones of indeterminability.” (Ibid, p. 975) The term coined by Grosz is that of ‘geopower’ and art is seen as one of its derivations that operates towards an intensification of life (Ibid, p. 977) Grosz explains that “geopower, the relations between the earth and its life forms, runs underneath and through power relations, immanent in them, as their conditions of existence.” (Ibid, p. 977) According to Yusoff, Grosz argues that this nature, propriety of geopower, is present in art and in art’s way of inhabiting time and organizing the chaos of life forces. *Waste-is-land* is attempting to embody and materialize a concept of transitioning and flux in-between states through its materiality and type of action involved.

#### **3.4.9 Anti-representational: perception, not expression**



*Butoh* dance, on the contrary of more theatrical ways of mise-en-scene, does not draw on the expressivity of the performer but on his/ her perception. After having cultivated an initial state of passivity (or better lack of activity) in order to become more receptive to their environment, *Butoh* dancers are “moved by” it. Here, the environment—which could also include the props—might be seen as the external to the body stimuli. According to Fraleigh, “Macarena Ortuzar imbues ordinary everyday use objects with new life: we could say that props become her dance partners [...] the encounter between her feet and the paper generates sensory qualities and modalities that are constitutive of her dance.” (Fraleigh 2010, p. 48) Fraleigh maintains that “*Butoh-body* is relational and not representational.” (Ibid) *Butoh* performers do not seek to convey information about a situation, but to embody and signify its essence throughout their movement and interaction in the space.

In addition, Kasai underlines that “in *Butoh*, the movement arises from the emptiness: the body-mind is a vessel that conveys and resonates with its environment.” (Kasai 2003, p. 257) Therefore, it is this very quality of atonement that the participants of *Waste-is-land* are encouraged to reach and preserve through the embodiment of their experience of doing the tasks. Akira Kasai, a well-known *Butoh* dancer, is referring to this state of presence as awareness in his interview and explains that “there are basically two ways to train the body. One is to build physical strength by working hard lifting barbell and doing push-ups. The other is to train the body by reaching realizations through awareness. Sometimes this latter brings bigger changes to the body.” (Kasai, 2013) The changes implied here by Kasai might not be directly visible but invoke invisible effects to the performers and their audience.

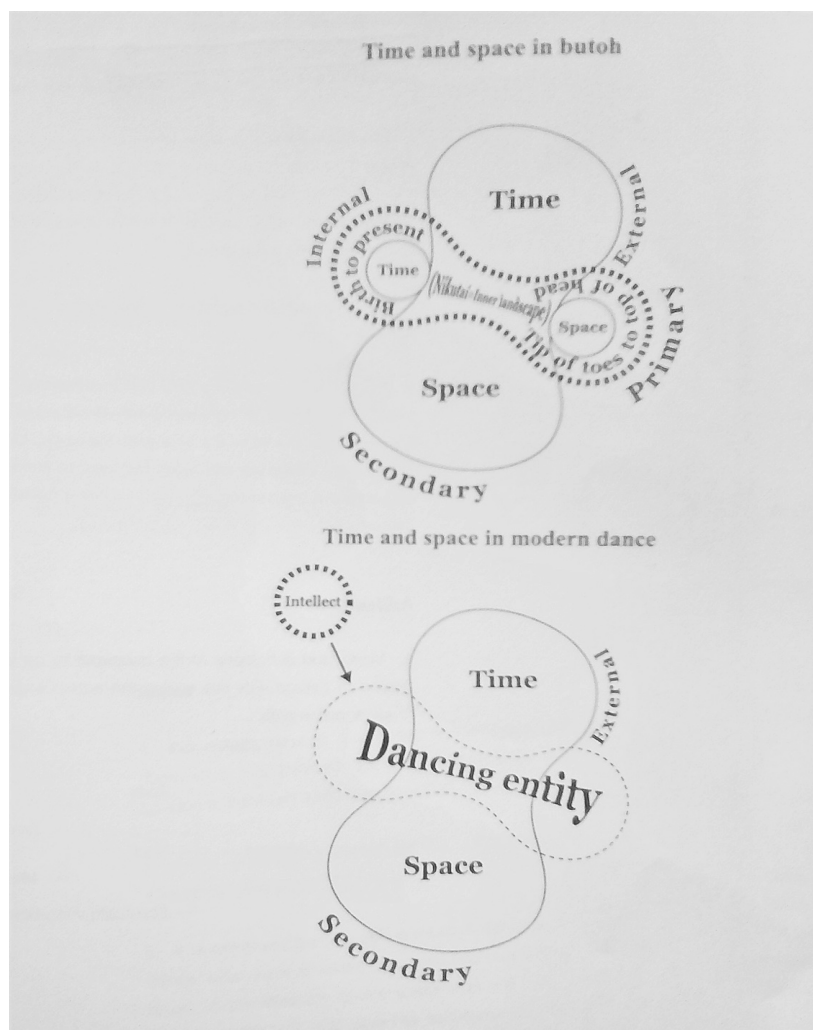
In *Waste-is-land*, the simplicity and the natural pace of the action were deliberately preserved. I have been testing this aspect through my observation of the participants while being inside the performative installation. The majority of the participants showed a more focused attention to their relationship with the materials and the action itself rather than manifesting controlled and predetermined movement patterns (which might be closer to a choreography-based movement that opposes itself to *Butoh* practice).

The *Butoh-ka* (dancers) are empty vessels: passive conveyors of the stimuli that they receive from the interconnectivity with their environment; *Butoh* dancers are first activating their peripheral perception, enabling the *body time* to “occur” thus staying open or, according to Zarrilli’s description, experiencing the *recessive* body. “The ‘recessive’ visceral body; the deep, inner, visceral body of corporeal depths, which in physical terms includes the mass of internal organs and processes enveloped by the body surface... is characterized by *interoception*...” (Zarrilli 2007, p. 54) The recessive body is a state from which unconscious and not controlled movements emerge in front of the gaze of the spectator; in this case this occurred in Glass Box, in the midst of the accidental participants.

*Waste-is-land* is exploring the *body of the relationship* between the perceiver and the materials (living processes) by drawing the attention to the materiality of the body. My research aims to offer an alternative of way of experiencing time-space in time-based art and goes beyond concepts of nationality, hence this research is not a study upon a Japanese cultural product that remains enclosed to itself: “Hijikata sought to express a way of moving (and being) that was no longer Japanese either not Japanese.”(Caldwell 2017, p. 20) By engaging with *Butoh-body* notion in my practice, I am enhancing the alteration of ordinary spatial and time perception in

relation to the artwork and in large. The research adopts an approach that opposes itself to ways of categorizing artworks primarily in base to their origin in terms of ethnicity. *Butoh-body* is addressed for its potentiality to enrich immersivity by offering a deeper understanding of our time and space perception within artistic context large.

Masaki Iwana refers to the concept of *nikutai* (translated as the body or the flesh) in order to illustrate how time and space are experienced in *Butoh*. He states that “*Butoh* dancers have always referred to the body with that immanent 'original landscape' ('dance') as *nikutai*, to be distinguished from the physical body, or flesh, as a biological entity.” (Iwana, 1989) Iwana explains that in order to realise *nikutai* in *Butoh*, the performers have to “recognize and amass personal experiences, memories and bodily habits; and since *butoh* [sic] is an art of expression, they must also have the ability to 'montage' those personal elements.” (Ibid) Therefore, there is a conscious effort to dig into one’s memories, identify where they are stored in the body and help them arise while at the same time craft their manifestation in a chain that communicates one’s inner landscape. My research inquiries into this way of perceiving the inner landscape of the body in correlation to the external. By providing the participants the opportunity to inhabit and alter the space with their bodily presence, via offering to them raw material to handle, an invitation to reflect upon process-based technologies is articulated.



**Fig. 41** Iwana, M., (2002) Illustration of *nikutai* [from *The intensity of nothingness*, p.20]

### 3.4.10 *Performativity in Performance Theory: what is it and why does it matter?*

As mentioned in chapter 1, there is an intrinsic link between *Butoh* and Happenings, starting from the fact that they emerged in the same chronological period and that their nature was that of deploying and enacting performativity. In this respect, it might be worth offering a brief excursus of the term performativity by illustrating how acting has been perceived during the last century to date.

Edward Braun notes that during the nineteenth century, traditional acting was role-

based. He adds that in Russia, Meyerhold was honouring the *Emploi*, he reserved the right to interpret *Emploi* freely (Braun 1969, p.203)

*Emploi Aktyora* (The Actor's *Emploi*) was published by State Higher Theater Workshop, and is an attempt to define seventeen male and seventeen female types according to their physical characteristics and vocal ranges [...] Each *emploi* is accompanied by examples of suitable roles drawn from a wide range of dramatic literature: classical and modern, Russian and foreign. (Ibid)

Campo (2016) notes that also

in 1800s the emerging pre-romantic literature [...] had indeed their own characters that could be ascribable to set roles; In general, specialisation and adherence to the *physique du rôle* (including voice) optimizes a professional actor's performance and creates a sort of "actor's character", able to be recycled in a fairly infinite number of variation. (Campo 2016, p.6)

Therefore, in that period, our contemporary understanding of performativity was replaced by the embodiment of stereotyped roles and theatre was dominated by the staging and enactment of fictional realities.

Campo points out that the end of roles and arrival of naturalism was facilitated by "a new element of the contemporary world that appeared and grew fast operating as a definitive breaking element: cinema." (Ibid, p.14) Cinema favoured theatre's adaptation to a business line and move from traditional acting based on roles towards the emergence of new professional figures: director and dramaturg.

Gradually, “actors became to be evaluated for their ability of making realistic performances, rather than effective, and started to work for cinema instead than for theatre, essentially for financial reasons, but also because of easiness of artistic performance.” (Ibid, p.15) Naturalism was in its time a radical development and overcoming of stylization of traditional styles such as Lyric opera, *Commedia dell'arte* and Kabuki. In this respect, when naturalism came into play, performativity has shifted to the actor's ability to give a realistic representation of a situation rather than the faithful reproduction of fixed roles.

Loxley offers a succinct historical tour of the development of performativity as a reaction to naturalism as follows:

Western theatre of the late nineteenth century witnessed the rise of a style of theatre that was described as ‘naturalist’, in which the aim was to break free of the then dominant conventions of dramatic writing and presentations [...] the actors were doing their best to create lifelike representations of people [...] what one saw onstage therefore could be described as an ‘iconic sign’, a representation that resembled what it stood for. (Loxley 2007, p.146)

Loxley names then some of the dissidents/ developers of naturalism, such as Brecht, Beckett and Artaud. The origins of an anti-representational theatre are found also in “the America of the 1950s [...] where artists as Kaprow saw in the action painting of the abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock the prospect of an art that is more practice than object [...]” (Ibid, p. 147) Kaprow's Happenings started to blend the ordinary life with the artistic practice; “nothing in a happening was being represented

or imitated: there was no illusion for an audience to enter and sometimes no audience at such at all.” (Ibid) In the above excursus from traditional theatre preceding contemporary performative experiments (including *Butoh* and Happenings), performativity emerges as an element that gets constantly shaped from its cultural and historical background.

Respectively in *Waste-is-land* the audience is not asked to perform or imitate something. They are introduced to a space that is in visible relation to its contextual urban landscape and they are invited to do a structured and guided action without aiming to represent something. This would be the difference between showing something to somebody and allowing oneself to be seen; the latter requires some degree of generosity and openness.

Richard Schechner, “set out his understanding of the relation between key terms as drama, script, theatre and performance. He imagined a model of four concentric discs or circles [...] At the bottom, encompassing all this, was what he called performance: the whole constellation of events, most of them passing unnoticed [...]” (Schechner 1988, p. 72 quoted in Loxley 2007, p. 149) Schechner stated that for him, performance was not only what happened within a clearly demarcated site as that of theatre, and made a division between ‘matrixed’ and ‘non-matrixed’ interactions (Ibid). Therefore, the body displayed in performance or performative practices, should not be addressed in terms of its skills and ability of representation, but is should rather be seen as an opportunity to reveal what would normally be concealed in our everydayness.

In addition, Dwight Conquergood notes that “through the attention that the study of performance brought to bear on the bodily, practical and processual nature of human

existence [...] has raised to academic visibility a whole way of living and knowing human lives that has been repressed by the standard western accounts of what knowledge is [...]" (Conquergood 2002 quoted by Loxley 2007, p.153) This way of knowledge to which Conquergood is alluding here, is very close to the concept of artist-philosopher so familiar in Asian traditions which has been discussed in the first chapter. By paying attention to the contextual non-demarcated areas of an action, we focus to the way things occur: this would be another way to relate to Nishida's *Acting intuition*. Hence, it is the issue of how we connect and co-exist with an object, the space, and other bodies that becomes the point under question in a performative discourse.

Performativity occurs in the border between the visible and the invisible, or the everyday and the extra-ordinary (out of the ordinary). In this respect performativity shares many aspects with ritual, which is "liminal because it takes its participants across a 'limen', or threshold, from one status or identity to another." (Loxley 2007, p. 155) Therefore, liminal phase is a "moment of fluidity and Turner associates it with the possibility of creativity, or invention or innovation [...] it is a moment of anti-structure." (Ibid, p. 156) Paradoxically, the passage from one status or identity referred here is not that of acting or imitating something different from what we are, but going back to our 'original self', the self that is not bound from a social interaction.

Schechner uses Turner's term *liminoid* in order to "trace out what he calls the 'efficacy-entertainment braid through the range of liminal and *liminoid* performances, where efficacy denotes the power of the performance to make a difference and entertainment by contrast indicates performances whose primarily purpose is to be enjoyed as some kind of spectacle." (Schechner 1988, p. 106-152 quoted by Loxley



2007, p. 157) This is a crucial distinction that is hopefully shedding light to the term immersion as well. The researched outcome of *Waste-is-land* is not only a physical experience that could be broken down into its spatial and temporal aspects; the very aim of this precise type of immersive event is the alteration (or at least a hint of) of the psychophysical disposition of the audience; a *liminoid* experience. This is the reason for encountering difficulty in collecting the participants' experience, since those effects are subtle and easy to measure within conventional methodologies of research analysis.

#### **3.4.11 Silence, *Butoh-fu* and verb-language**

One of the guidelines that was given to the audience before entering the space and initiating the action, was that of communicating with each other without verbalization. In *Butoh*, the dancers are mainly engaging with their body as a material entity and this cultivates a separation of their everyday social behaviour. The aim is to reach a deeper and primal level of communication among the participants. Verbal communication is a pattern that we use in our daily life and represents already a codified system of life experience, whereas creativity emerges as a breakthrough of the already known and structured way of interaction. *Butoh-fu* (mentioned in chapter 1) is the score that *Butoh* dancers are working with when improvising and shaping their dance. It was introduced by Hijikata in a visual form whereas Ohno might use a poetic verbal way of transmitting it to his dancers.

Paola Esposito (2013), in her book *Butoh dance in the UK*, underlines that “embodiment of imagery in *Butoh* is not picture or noun oriented, but process or

verb-oriented.” (Ibid, p. 194) She is quoting Liao, who “emphasizes the use of verbs and adjectives in the constitution of *Butoh* imagery.” (Ibid) For this reason, and because of its image-making nature, *Butoh-fu* may be parallelized to poetry or poetic language. The audio piece that was running throughout the whole experience, was a vocal improvisation of the first four verses of *The Waste Land* (Eliot, 1922). The audio track was a mix of sounds, broken words, spelling attempts, randomly and emotionally charged pronunciations of words. The exploration was that of de-constructing or eliminating patterns of socially formed behaviour in order to enhance the immersive experience of the participants. Those particular verses of *The Waste Land* incorporate many verbs such as: “breeding [...] mixing [...] stirring” and adjectives: “cruellest [...] dead [...] dull.” (Eliot, 1922) Furthermore, the way they were pronounced was encouraging the audience to focus to the sonority of the word rather than seek for a literal meaning and explanation.

According to Esposito, in *Butoh* “a perceptual relation is established between a dancer and an image on the basis of sensory cues that are suggestively, “embedded” in the linguistic and narrative structure of the image itself.” (Ibid, p.182) She adds that “ultimately, images are not meant to linger in the dancer’s mind, but to overlap with his or her psychophysical condition, so that the dancer and the image become one.” (Ibid, p. 187) Therefore, the sound texture of the verb and the quality of the experience described, are meant to accompany the participant in *Waste-is-land* into a sub-conscious level. Esposito explains that “the image-verb dripping specifies an important principle of aesthetic efficacy in *Butoh*, where a relatively simple action unfolds as though it were an organic natural process [...] Dripping provides an intuitive and rhythmical reference as for the way in which the main task of falling is carried out.” (Ibid, p. 277) Similarly, the participants in *Waste-*

*is-land* were asked to do some actions such as stirring that often overlapped with the text of the vocal improvisation. In addition, the text acted as sensory bond that interlinked their individual experience to a common imagery among members of each group.



**Fig. 42** *Waste-is-land* (Session 8) April 2018, Glass Box, Ulster University Belfast

### 3.5.1 Research positionality in *Waste-is-land*

#### Participant observation:

I am combining the visual documentation of each iteration with my personal comments upon each case. This is a subjective reading of the situation and I am adopting “participant observation”, a qualitative research method of the anthropological survey field. Participant observation is “a method of research in anthropology which involves extended immersion in a culture and participation in its day-to-day activities.” (Calhoun, 2002) This type of research methodology is usually adopted in social sciences fieldwork whenever the researcher desires to observe a group without altering its behaviour.

The reasons why I decided to take part to the iterations and “conduct participant observation of specific people or activities in my related topic” (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015, p. 171) were the following: a) being able to have a first-hand experience in order to observe deeper and all the aspects of the event and b) not causing any distress to the participants—or minimise the distress—from the fact that I was observing them. I wanted to avoid the prospect that some might feel that they have to prove or act in a certain way according to my expectations. I preferred their experience to be free from my interference and decided that being inside the actions would create a situation of parity with the audience.

However, for the reason that the participants were aware of my role in the project, this constituted a “...moderate participation, where you conduct some participation with observation thus you are both an insider and an outsider.” (Ibid, p. 182) The risks of this choice were that the participants were perceiving me as the initiator of the actions. I had to be very careful to dismiss myself from this role and, at the same

time, create a safe environment where participants could find their own way within the frame of a tacit agreement.

I will describe my subjective point of view upon the research project as it might be important in order to understand the subjective reading of the situation: I perceived my experience of the research development as being oscillating in that way: The first three sessions (1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>) were characterised by curiosity and the attempt to find out how the groups were interacting with the space and each other. The following three (4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>) enabled the recognition of some normalities/ patterns that have noticed arising in people's interaction with the artwork. During the next two (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) sessions, I tended to be more reserved and reflective, hence less open to the interaction with the people and the space, and possibly this has influenced the participants' perceptions. During the 9<sup>th</sup> session (last), I was quite receptive and open to the experience as I perceived it as a kind of closing up ritual.

### **3.5.2 Other methods of data gathering and analysis**

#### Visual documentation:

I conducted "observation with visual aids [...] by using visual recording material such as video or still camera." (Heinnink, Hutter & Bailey, 2015, p.187) After each iteration, I took photos of the final outcomes. This permitted me to a) be able to discuss the differences that occurred and b) offered proof that the engagement of the participants involved a creative process in so far as the aesthetic results were different each time, based on the participants' interpretation of the given "task".

### Phenomenological approach upon the written feedback:

The method that I am going to adopt in order to discuss and analyse the collected data, is the 'Phenomenological Interpretive Analysis';

The approach is phenomenological [...] in that it involves detailed examination of the participant's lifeworld; it attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself.

(Smith & Osborn 2007, p.3)

I have therefore, transcribed the hand-written responses of the audience and identified the recurrent 'Themes' (Ibid, p.15) in base of the repetition of keywords and registered how often they appear. Finally, I will discuss those themes; their interpretation will lead to my research findings.

### Discursive seminar as way of collecting data:

Based on the feedback collected and therefore on my understanding of the lack of precision in its interpretation, I have opted to introduce another data analysis technique in order to collect more accurate feedback. For the third research project (*Sky-field*), I led a filmed group discussion with the participants reflecting on their experience. The open in-depth discussion of their experience from *Sky-field* allowed me to gain insight upon themes that are currently "slippery" as terms. The discursive seminar was structured with open-ended questions so that participants were allowed

to contribute in a more personal way of response. Moreover, they were listening to other participants' points of view and this fommented a more animated dialogue that built into some conclusions as a group. For example, it would occur that participants might comment or confirm another participant's experience and hopefully expand the previous statement with their own experience of the event. See also the index with written transcription of the discursive seminar following *Sky-field 1 and 2*.

### 3.6 Contextualization of *Waste-is-land* within practitioners' work

Brian Connolly is a performance artist and sculptor/ installation artist based in Northern Ireland. I will refer to his term Install-action in so far as I consider it a hybrid artform that resonates with my research installations. The reason it appears related to my own methodology of practice has to do with the fact that in both cases participants' performativity shapes the nature of the final outcome while initiating and fomenting living responses within time and space.

Within his article in *Inter Art Magazine*, Connolly outlines how he generated and defined the term 'Install-action' in the mid 1990's in his article 'L'interieur et l'arene de l'art' published in the 'Inter' Art Actuel Magazine (1999) In this article he outlined the root of 'Install-action', both as title and a new genre of performance art practice. Connolly has created a series of install-actions that are usually engaging with different mediums, often entangling everyday objects demonstrating a creative way of displaying political or social issues. The artist explains that he was invited to participate

in a project entitled "Conquest" which invited three Artists to respond to the theme and make performance Installations in the Le Lieu Gallery Space in Quebec City [...] the 'Conquest' Theme asked each artist to consider the 400th anniversary of the founding of the City of Quebec and make a performative/ installative response within the gallery space as a one-person Performance Exhibition. [...] Questions that I dealt with in the resolution and development of a new artwork centred round issues including 'What are the main visual and historical elements that I can distil and employ within an artwork centred on the exhibition theme' [...] (Connolly, 2008)



Connolly often shares with his audience his process of creating a vivid landscape where people become either active witnesses that are affected by the physicality of his work, or are encouraged to participate in it. A previous version of *History lesson* encompassed different tasks given to the participants who actively inhabited and transformed the space with their actions. Some of the tasks might be contrasting: this was designed to provoke tension within the group and create unpredictable situations where the participants are required to react and intervene in their own way without following a pre-established recipe; this particular quality of Connolly's work re-ties it with the concept of 'anti-structure'. (Turner quoted by Loxley, 2007, p.156) That is: a liminoid performance is by definition fluid and invites intervention, creativity and rearrangement of the set of rules.

Connolly mentions that "an install-action piece can take shape from very little and build a visually complex network of meanings within the process, while another may emerge from a pre-designated visual complexity and move towards chaos, destruction or accomplishment." (Connolly, 1999) He states that the action is influenced and shaped by the "form of the space" or can be guided with "a set of actions." He is adding chance as one factor of the install-action, possible catalyst of the artwork. Similarly, in *Waste-is-land* participants were given a set of rules that remained fluid since they had to find their own way within it. This preserved a degree of fluidity and unpredictability within the frame of the performative installation which is visible in the visual documentation of the disparate ways that each group of participants responded to it.



**Fig. 43** Connolly, R. B. *Water table* [Live performance] Belfast: Golden Thread gallery





**Fig. 44 & 45** Connolly, R. B. (2008) History Lesson – Install-action [live performance]  
Quebec: Le Lieu Gallery Space

Marilyn Arsem is a member of Mobius Inc., an interdisciplinary collaborative of artists, which she founded in 1975 (Boston). She has been active internationally in visually-based performance art. In her text “Some thoughts on teaching performance art in five parts” she comments that “performance art is the act of doing. It is not representing, not recounting, not re-enacting but simply doing [...] a direct action [...] an experiment with a portion of one’s life.” (Arsem, 2017) She reflects that since the work cannot be separated from the body, a series of questions arise considering the medium of performance art, that is performativity itself.



**Fig. 46** Arsem, M., (2013) *Adrift* [live performance] USA, Massachusetts: First Biennial Festival of Performance Art and Sound Art, The Quarry at Contemporary Arts International Action, photo by Ben Potsaid

*Adrift* is a durational performance where, Arsem was floating, very still, in the frigid, spring-fed water of the quarry, face upwards and staring at the sky. “Afterwards I



learned that 30 years ago the town thought that a woman's body had been disposed of in the quarry, put into a car and sunk. They drained the quarry to search for her. They didn't find her body, but they did remove 27 automobiles." (Arsem, 2013) In a way her action, while merging with her environment in the very literal sense of the term, helped a collective memory to emerge.

Arsem notes that

One of the compelling aspects of doing performance art is the opportunity to practice living fully in the moment. When one's senses are fully engaged and one's awareness is heightened, time slows down and a kind of out-of-body experience occurs. If everything is in tune, the experience can create a kind of ecstasy and with that a sense of timelessness occurs. (Arsem, 2013)

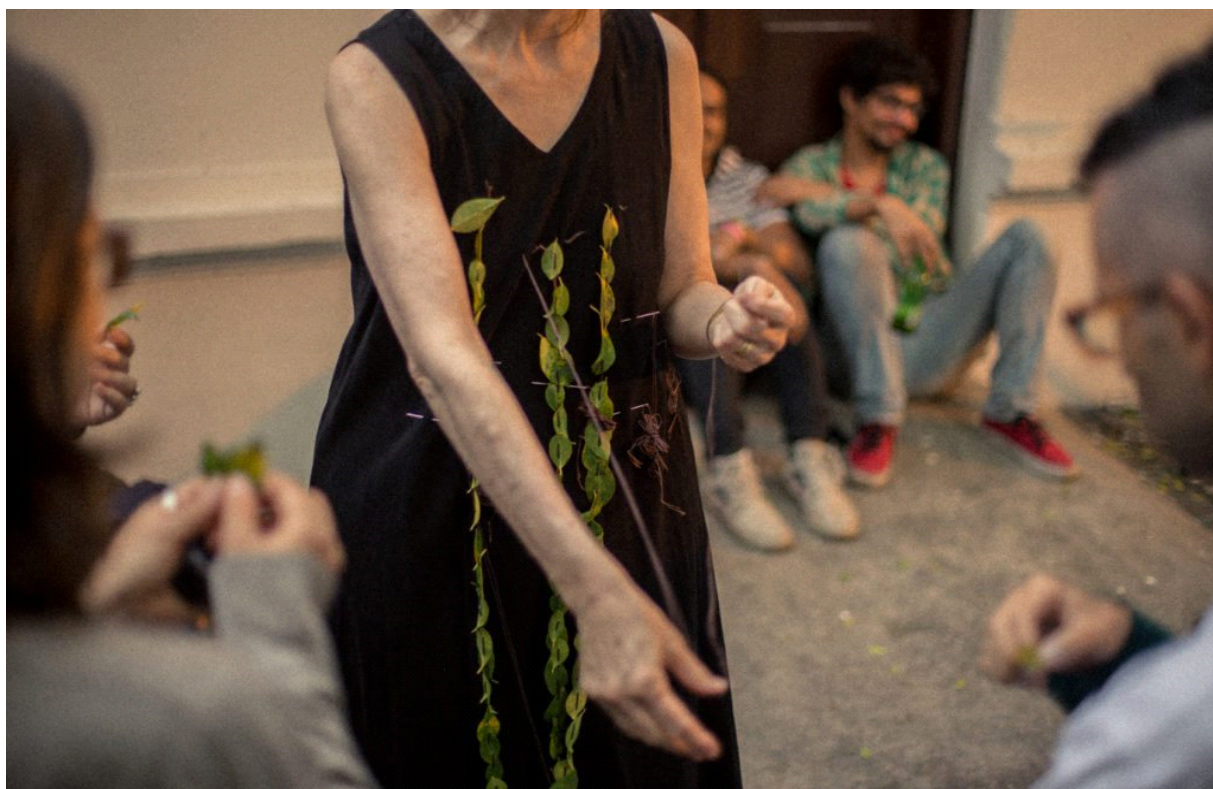
This sensation that is described by Arsem as 'ecstasy', resonates with the term immersion in my research. It is a sensation that goes beyond the physical fusion of the body with its environment; liminality stands at the core of the ecstatic experience. Arsem often works with participatory practices where people are asked to contribute to her action in a concrete way or simply witness her doing. *Fall* is a durational performance that took place in the courtyard at the back of the main building of Oficina Cultural Oswald Andrade in Sao Paulo. Arsem was staring up into a very old Indian fig tree with the participants. They were waiting for the leaves to fall and tried to catch them in mid-air. People were handing the leaves they collected to her and she sewed them together. This action was very simple and encouraged the people to become aware of their surroundings and sensitive on subtle changes. In a way, attunement with the environment was necessary in order for things to occur. "People

came and went, and the wind came less often.” (Arsem, 2016) The artist’s statement reveals an approach of interconnecting forces incorporating human and non-human entities.

Live bodies, especially in an intimate setting where everyone is in close proximity, create a volatile dynamic [...] viewers identify with the person in action whether they are conscious of it or not. Their bodies begin to mirror the same muscle tension and breathing patterns as the body they are watching. [...] feel both inside and outside of the action simultaneously. (Arsem, 2016)

Therefore, the artist pays great attention to the sharing of the experience in its primal, physical level. And bodily presence appears to be a requisite for this special kind of intermingling forces to arise; Arsem might be describing *Basho* in her own words.





**Fig. 47 & 48** Arsem, M., (2016) *Fall* [performance] Sao Paulo: Festival La Plataformance, Resistencia em Rede, primeira edicao, Officina Cultural Oswald Andrade, photo by Loreta, C.

Joseph Beuys (Germany) has been one of the most influential figure in contemporary art of twentieth century: a Fluxus, happening, and performance artist as well as a painter, sculptor, medallist, installation artist, graphic artist, art theorist, and pedagogue. Heiner Bastian, in his essay on Beuys, entitled *Forms of initiation* (1999) is mentioning that in Beuys's drawings, "complementary dualisms recur constantly, but above all we find the underlying process of transformation, dissolution and movement." (Bastian 1999, p. 24) However, his special relationship with nature is different from that of expressers of romanticism. Heiner remarks that "while Caspar David Friedrich and Arnold Boecklin looked at Nature and saw a self-contained apotheosis that was eternally beyond the grasp of humankind, Beuys made humanity still intact, part of his vision of Nature." (Ibid, p. 30) Beuys sustained

that the bond between humankind and nature was not broken with industrialisation but potentially actual and alive.

Therefore, the presence of death is recurrent in Beuys's artworks in an attempt to maintain his mysterious contact with Nature. Similarly, *Lifedeath*, is a concept that stands into the core of the *Butoh* body and in particular *Waste-is-land* where the audience is asked to perform an action that is blending those two polarities: decaying clothes with a plant in growth.

Beuys, in his speech given the 1974, addressed the relationship between Science and Art as follows: "To make rational the things of the world [...] is what science is able to achieve [...] Art, however, operates at another pole of man's development, his sensorium: firstly, by preserving and nurturing it and secondly by developing additional new sensory organs." (Beuys 1999, p. 52)

In the performance *Twenty-Four Hours*, Beuys fasted for multiple days before being confined to a room surrounded by objects. Throughout the twenty-four hours, he would pick up objects within his reach, as he did not allow himself to remove his feet from the box/platform he was standing on and pose with the objects. He was inquiring upon different ways of using the everyday objects while incorporating them into his body and his body was engulfed by them. This action is resonating with Merleau-Ponty's concept of the chiasmatic body where the French philosopher "begins his evocation of the flesh as a pre-discursive state of flux, in relation to which perceptual experience is the insistent reminder of a mystery." (Vasseleu 1998, p. 41)

The concept of the chiasmatic body embodied by Beuys's action, has a striking resonance with *Butoh-body* in so far as they both refer to a pre-verbal state of presence where body and its environment manifest themselves as interrelated and ambiguous.



Beuys has been influenced by Fluxus, Futurists and Dadaists. He often got inspired in particular by John Cage's theories: he occasionally used them as scores to his actions. He is identifying man as "the bender of the space, the bender of time, the producer of space and counter space, the producer of time and counter time [...]" (Beuys 1993, p.53) He believes that "Man's potential for a vastly different experience of this world—spiritually and materially—is far broader than the formulation of modern physics would suggest." (Ibid)

His visionary thoughts about strengthening the bond between the humankind and nature, led to the creation of the concept "Social Sculpture". This concept set the basis for this ideology of universality and of a natural process. His philosophy found one of its materialisations in his action *Seven thousand Oaks*, inaugurated at the International exhibition of contemporary art *Documenta 7* in Kassel, Germany in 1982. *Seven thousand Oaks* involved the planting of seven thousand oaks, each paired with four-foot-high basalt columns.



**Fig. 49** Beuys, J. (1965) *Twenty-four hours* [live performance] Wuppertal: Galerie Parnass



**Fig. 50** Beuys, J. (1982) *Seven thousand Oaks* [live performance] Kassel: Documenta 7

Lygia Clark was a Brazilian visual artist mostly known for her interdisciplinary participatory projects. “In the mid-1960s Brazilian artist Lygia Clark turned from painting and sculpture to make participatory *proposições* (propositions).” (Lepecki, 2017) In her essays *Affective Geometry*, *Immanent Acts: Lygia Clark and Performance* (Part 1, 2 & 3), Lepecki explains that Clark’s aim was to reach the double goal of achieving the anonymous work and of the artist dissolving in the work.” (Ibid) The first proposition was an act to be carried out by one participant and was named as *Caminhando*: The instructions were very simple: “take a strip of paper, twist it once, glue the ends together to form a Mobius strip, pick up a pair of scissors, and cut the strip along its length without fully severing it -an exercise of concentration, commitment and continuous choice...” (Ibid)



**Fig. 51** Clark, L., (1963) *Caminhando* [live performance], Rio de Janeiro: “The world of Lygia Clark” Cultural Association

Lea Lublin, quoted in Lepecki’s text, refers to Clark’s work as having as aim “not to create an event for an audience, and to use the artist’s actions and body as the object of contemplation, but to invite everyone to experience his or her own body as an agent of choice, in an open process of discovery immanent to the performance of an act.” (Ibid) Therefore, it is the body awareness and individual performativity that Clark is working with.

Later on, she worked with small or bigger groups in a series of propositions entitled *Arquiteturas biológicas* (Biologic architecture) often using a simple material or everyday objects in order to activate a physical net of interrelations between the participants/ co- creators’ bodies and the connecting source. “This would be Clark’s sole purpose in making quasi-objects, or quasi-bodies, out of everyday’s transitory

materials and things, all activated and often constructed by one participant or more.” Therefore, Clark’s work is about the “incorporation and the assimilation of the art objects” (Ibid) which she is perceiving as somewhat indistinguishable from the bodies and the actions of the participants. Moreover, for her, this represented a way of making an institutional critique, by working with the perception that “our bodies have been captured by various institutional forces and sad affects.” This is a concern shared by Hijikata, and his very motivation for founding the *Butoh* dance. Seen as a rebellion toward the goal-oriented westernised society, *Butoh* is introducing a process-based approach.

Similarly, *Waste-is-land* is working with process both as methodology and concept. Clark in her writings between 1948-1988, refers to this very approach as such: “The viewer no longer projects himself into the work or finds identity in it. He experiences the work and by living its nature, he lives himself within himself [...] we are new primitives in a new era.” (Clark 2014, p. 158)

Clark’s work resonates with my practice in the current research in so far as she is deepening into the distance between subject and object; she states that “No separation between subject and object is achieved [...] In being the work and the act of making the work itself, you and it becomes completely inseparable.” (Ibid, p. 160) For Clark, this is the revival of “the ritual, the expressive gesture, but now with a concept entirely different from all other eras.” (Ibid, p. 158) Hence, her practice, by dealing with the action of making and the abandonment of authorship, is engaging a different view of performativity that links it tighter to our everydayness; this approach is in line with an alternative ontology of the body deriving by *Butoh*.





**Fig. 52** Clark, L., (1968) *Arquiteturas biológicas. Ovo mortalha* [live performance], Rio de Janeiro: Courtesy "The World of Lygia Clark" Cultural Association

Alastair MacLennan does not express such a radical position as Lygia Clark who says she is no longer making art. However, he does “share with her a wish to overcome dichotomies like ‘organic intuition’ and ‘logical thought’ [...] (Sverakova 1988, p.9) MacLennan explains that for him, “training in Zazen practice meant that attention to living processes took over the need to engage in the making of art objects [...] first-hand experience for me was crucial.” (MacLennan 1987, p. 12 quoted by Sverakova 1988, p. 8) “The process of making art became more important for me rather than conceptually fixating on the future completed art object.” (MacLennan, interviewed by Kolliopoulou, Belfast, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018)

MacLennan describes his practice with the term “Actuations” which he understands as “an activation of the space that lays in a dormant state, freeing up what is there. It is an actual action because it is bearing what exists. I prefer that to the term Situated of site-specific because the latter refer to the space without taking into account its inherent potentialities to become.” (Ibid)

In this interview, his predilected way of working with organic, raw materials has been questioned: “I understand organic materials as basic elements, primal to life instead of processed or screen-based means of representation. The reason is that I perceive that this type of materiality keeps the body more grounded, help us preserve our linkage to the nature and ecological thinking and brings forth the notion of death.” (Ibid) He perceives the terms Life and Death as two states in the same concept and maintains that his art making aims at the breaking of conceptual limitations without imposing a prescriptive role to the spectator. He primarily addresses the senses of the audience and prefers to “allow space so that audience actuates a situation.” (Ibid)

Sverakova remarks that in MacLennan’s work, “the use of the opposites is a dominant strategy [...] He poetically articulates the interplay between such opposites and is obsessively interested in the binding intensity between opposites, like placement- displacement, etc).” (Sverakova 1988, p.11) Similarly, in *Butoh* body, often too the imagery is that of two opposites forces occurring at the same time in the dancing body, both contrasting states are subsequently occurring, and we bear into their transition. *Butoh fu* might include a visual landscape as well as a conflicting atmosphere. Giving an example from my own experience of Takenouchi’s seminar (2017), I recall working with the *Butoh-fu* of the blind girl that wants to touch the sky with her dance, the handicapped young boy that dreams he is joining his mates to

play in the back yard, or the mother that has to bury her own child walking back into her village watching a beautiful sunset. All those atmospheres contain a bittersweet nuance that resonates with *Lifedeath* as it has been addressed in *Waste-is-land*.

Another pertinent aspect of MacLennan's practice is the "method of ritualizing daily acts [...] the performance becomes its seeming opposite—a contemplation by the performing self." (Ibid, p. 12) In *Days and Nights*, he was walking backwards at ACME Galery for six days and nights. This is a practice that draws from walking meditation in Zen practices. Schechner notes that "any ritual can be lifted from its original setting and performed as theatre just as any everyday event can be. This is possible because context, distinguishes ritual, entertainment and everyday life from each other." (Schechner & Shuman 1976, p.217) Often using stillness or walking as a way of performing his actuations, MacLennan becomes both the observer and the observed of the situation that is emerging in and around him. In this way, an everyday action such as walking becomes a performative event because of its duration, modality and the location where it is performed.



**Fig. 53** MacLennan, A., (2012) [live performance] Belfast: Queen's University, photo by Juergen Fritz





**Fig. 54** MacLennan, A., (1981) *Days and Nights*, 144 hours Actuation [live performance]  
London: A.C.M.E. Gallery 15th January - midnight, 17th January 1981

### 3.7 Conclusions

*Waste-is-land* provided my research with some important insights in relation to its research design:

- a) The duration of the event has been shaped by participants' experience instead of modelling it beforehand- which was the case in *Seabed*. This offered disparate results based on the composition and synergy of each group.
- b) Using organic materials has enabled participants to gain contact with their physicality and grounded their embodiment. The latter are requisites in order to reach immersivity as it is defined within the current research.
- c) The background of the participants was a determining factor in their modality of interaction with the artwork. In a second instance, their level of openness towards creativity and physical interaction has affected the final outcome. This was captured by means of visual documentation after each iteration.
- d) The institutional setting of the performative event, as well as the fact that participants were seen by an accidental audience led to more or less controlled behaviour with one exception of Participant in Group 2. However, in that case the Participant was an experienced performance artist which might have interfered with her responses and the freedom that she manifested in the interpretation of the task.
- e) The researcher observed a kind of censorship arising in her attitude whenever Participant from Group 2 was interacting with the work in a more aggressive manner. This led to the conclusion that an indirect control over the overall

participants' behaviour might have been communicated to some degree. A possible solution could be to repeat the action in a non-institutionalized setting in the future.

- f) The research methods used in order to collect participants' feedback have been insufficient and prevented the collection of more personalized data. This will be further tested out in *Sky-field* by adding the method of the filmed discursive seminar aiming to reach more in depth into their experience.
- g) The moderate participant observation was quite effective; however, some participants mentioned that they felt that they should imitate the researcher. This is a delicate issue which needs further investigation, at the moment participant observation seems to quite effectively suit the current research.
- h) The following performative installation (*Sky-field*) will attempt to model itself upon those findings and experiment with their research design in order to reach a satisfying conclusion.

## Chapter 4

### ***Sky-field*, performative installation**

In this chapter, I will introduce and discuss my third research performative installation, entitled *Sky-field*. *Sky-field* was a video install-action (Connolly, 1999) where I experimented by implementing video projection within the space. My research question through *Sky-field* has been addressing and testing out the potentialities of video as medium to enhance the immersive effect of *Butoh-body*. I have been working with different methods and forms of engagement to date. My research design included:

- A. stillness and individual fruition in *Seabed* where the audio input marked the temporality of the piece.
- B. small groups' tasks engaging with materiality and its processual character in *Waste-is-land*; here the audio input was the recording of a vocal improvisation
- C. finally, experimenting with the compresence of audio and video medium while a task given to a broader group was evolving in *Sky-field*.

The evaluation of *Sky-field* did not satisfy entirely the premises of the current research because the practice component led to further research findings other than the expected ones illuminating different aspects of immersivity. This fact necessitated re-designing aspects of it in order to have some results closer to the researched effect. This second version was entitled *Sky-field 2* and developed upon the initial project (*Sky-field*). In *Sky-field 2* the material aspect of the installation has been unaltered, but the arrangement and research design has been significantly modified.

## 4.1 Creation process

### 4.1.1 video

I have started working on *Sky-field* since February 2018, having as initial fixed point that it should incorporate a video projection. I gathered a series of starlings' short-length videos filmed in Belfast, the city where I am currently based, thus responding to the site-specificity of my surroundings. Those short films were capturing the process of murmurations which takes place over Albert Bridge during the autumn and winter months. I was drawn to murmurations because it is an impressive visual and kinaesthetic phenomenon that is process-based. Furthermore, it manifests an internal pace and rhythm and reconnects to the physicality of the environment (space, temperature, light). In this research, I see murmurations as a natural process vulnerable to its surroundings, thus constantly adapting to the given circumstances. Similarly, according to Richard Moore (1991), the body in *Butoh* is perceived as an empty shell connecting to the space and somehow moved by an external force often visualized as a light that strikes it from outside. Moore, in his documentary *Piercing the mask-Butoh*, underlines that "Butoh begins with the abandonment of the self [...] this is its starting point." (Moore 2007 28:29 min) Hence, it is because of self-abandonment that *Butoh-body* becomes opener to its surroundings'. In an analogous way that each bird forms the flock which is then arranged to the murmurations' pattern within given circumstances of place that hosts it.



**Fig. 55 & 56** *Sky-field*, February 2018 screen shots from murmurations in Albert Bridge

Later on, in mid-July 2018, the footage of the murmurations was further elaborated in the editing suite by adding a blurring effect. This editing decision was the fruit of my bodily experience with Masaki Iwana when attended his *Butoh* seminar (June 2018). Iwana is one of the most acclaimed *Butoh* dancers in the contemporary dance scene. Recently, he has expanded his artistic production as a filmmaker and has written the book *The intensity of nothingness* (2011). This book offers much clarity concerning his personal experience and approach on *Butoh* dance. The seminar has been insightful in different regions of experience; I will refer to the most important topics and tie them up with my own research practice.

In this seminar, Iwana's working method has been the embodiment of *nikutai*; (see also at 3.4.9 Discussion of focal points' section, *Anti-representational: perception, not expression*). *Nikutai* is a Japanese term that refers to the inner landscape of the performers which is nurturing and motivating their actions and presence on stage. We worked with a series of *Butoh-fu* (scores that foment performer's imagery). *Butoh-fu* either correspond to natural processes or manifest processual character that stems from an emotional state. They are transmitted to the dancers through words or images (See chapter 1, Why *Butoh* acts as the axis of this project, p. 15). Iwana's *Butoh-fu* examples would be blooming, rotting, unwilling departure or vanishing body. In the conceptual development of *Sky-field* I have been focusing to the 'vanishing body'. The instructions for 'vanishing body' have been to move backwards towards the backstage while facing the viewers and create a blurring impression with our background. We were asked to work in four levels: 1) perceive the consistency of our body becoming gradually thinner, 2) experience our colours as if they were fading out, 3) become transparent and 4) loose our borders with the external world.



The 'vanishing body' *Butoh-fu* is resonating with my experience of sensing an absence of distance or being surrounded by the wind which has informed *Seabed* (see chapter 2, Staging my bain-marie experience, p. 50). When practicing 'vanishing body', the practitioners that undertook the seminar were divided in two groups which subsequently experimented the bond between the vanishing body and its surroundings. This complex experience involved all the senses and embraced different levels of consciousness. The two groups were changing roles between performing the *Butoh-fu* (*Butoh-ka*) and observing (viewers). The most astonishing thing was that as we were trying to blur our own visual and kinaesthetic field while moving backstage, we actually manifested the image of somebody that is disappearing. This state of psychophysical withdrawal resulted as blurring effect to the observers: when practicing the 'vanishing body', I perceived my body matter as transparent and my joints loosely connected and this changed the quality of my movements and position in the stage; for this reason the viewers empathically sensed a similar sensation of an increasing disappearance and dissolution in the space. Fraleigh (2010) often refers to *Butoh* as being a metamorphic dance for both audience and performer. Merleau-Ponty writes, "one's own body is the third term, always tacitly understood, in the figure-background structure, and every figure stands out against the double horizon of external and bodily space" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. 101 quoted in Leder 1990, p.13) Based on my embodiment of 'vanishing body' and according to this quote, I propose that our own bodily space, which is marked by our perception, may affect our external image.

In *Sky-field*, I have been questioning how and whether the medium of video-as part of the whole setting of the installation-may enrich participants' immersivity. Merleau-



Ponty suggests that: “one must therefore reject as an abstraction any analysis of bodily space which takes account only of the figures and points, since these can neither be conceived nor be without horizons.” (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p.101) After the seminar with Iwana, I decided to enrich my original filming of murmurations by adding to the video a blurring effect. If our bodily perception with regards to our surroundings is affecting the impression that we give to the viewers (which in this case is that of a ‘vanishing body’) what will occur if our surroundings begin to gradually blur? Therefore, in *Sky-field* I have been using the conceptual framework of Iwana’s *Butoh-fu* working with the bond of the body with the surroundings but this time, from the perspective of the space. ‘Vanishing body’ marks a gradual incremental sensation of losing or perceiving as fluctuating our proper body’s border within the space. Through my research I have been questioning whether a gradually blurring background could lead to a body sensation of withdrawal: How might a blurring modification over a video influence the relationship between the body of the participants and the space?

#### **4.1.1 Web of white clothes**

Another element of *Sky-field* crafting process was knitting the web of white clothes. In *Seabed*, I have been using a similar pattern with black clothes that were covering the metallic structure within which people were invited to insert themselves. In *Waste-is-land*, a number of clothes have been left in open air until they deteriorate and then displayed throughout the installation at Glass Box. In all those performative

installations, clothes have been used as a reminder of human body, presence and experience.

In *Sky-field*, I followed the same modality as *Seabed*: asking my family and friends for second-hand white clothes that were not of value anymore—starting with my own. Once they were collected, I then knitted a web of them, intervening whenever it was necessary and paying much attention to the voids among them (see chapter 2, Enabling Voids, the concept of *Ma*, p. 73).

I have opted for the colour white because it is one of the colours that are traditionally connected to *Butoh*; but is also a non-colour, something that reflects back what is, and therefore does not mark the space with a strong positionality. Rudolf Arnheim states that: “the fact that colour conveys strong expression is undisputed [...] there is a widespread belief that the expression of colour is based on association.” (Arnheim 1954, p.326) He adds that “some experiments have demonstrated a bodily response to colour.” (Ibid, p.327) Also, for Kandinsky, “white is a symbol or a world from which all colour, as material quality and substance has disappeared [...] for this reason, white affect us with the absoluteness of a great silence [...] it is not a dead silence but one full of possibilities.” (Kandinsky 1946, p.68) Both Arnheim and Kandinsky acknowledge the bodily effects of colour on the viewers: they point out that colour’s effect is relative in base of viewers’ associations which are built on their personally and culturally experiences.

White objects are brighter than any other colour and this affects us in relation to their weight perception. This occurs because white reflects the light, and this adds to the impression of a white object being lighter. Furthermore, this choice was judged to be more consonant with the murmurations video—depicting birds in flight—and the relative sense of height, lightness and movement. The visual fluidity created by the

patterns of clothes and the voids resonated with the organicity of the movement of birds in flight. In this way my aspiration was to create an ensemble of visual and three-dimensional stimuli that surrounds the spectator in an embracing and coherent way.



**Fig. 57 & 58** *Sky-field*, crafting process of white clothes' web

#### **4.1.2 rice and wheat flour**

*Sky-field* was a performative installation; therefore, the participants were asked to be actively part of it through an action that engaged with its materiality. In this case I have opted for the use of a blend of raw material associated with our bodily everyday life needs: rice and wheat flour. Those two materials are both primal sources for our nutrition because they are accessible in terms of price and not excessively processed by the food industry in comparison to pre-cooked meals; moreover, they

invite us for a primordial connection with them because they are not sophisticated and complex. In addition, because in this raw state they have still to become comestible, they allude to a natural process that has yet to arrive (be boiled, kneaded etc.). In this sense, they are materials marked by their potentiality to become something else.



**Fig. 59** *Sky-field*, the web of white clothes (3m x 4m) installation process, Pollen studios

Rice was reconnected to the whiteness of *Sky-field*, in an attempt of building a cohesive visual impact of the artwork. Similarly, wheat flour is another source of food, therefore a life source that had similar visual aspect to rice (whitish) but not enough to be confused with it. Furthermore, rice is related to the images deriving from Hijikata's memories from his childhood in the Tohoku prefecture, Akita region of Northern Japan. Hijikata often recalled the immense fields of rice and his parents

working hard in open-air. Those kinaesthetic experiences have fuelled in him the conception of *Butoh* dance as a form that draws from farmers' body (see chapter 3, *Activating the peripheral perception of the spectators*, p.127).

Lastly, the almost overlapping nuances of rice and wheat flour invited us to adopt different senses in order to relate to them, in this case, tactility. Tactility, together with smell are basic senses of the human body; if we consider that as babies we arrive in the world without having any means of defining the meaning of shapes and images we encounter visually, whereas we tend to use literally our skin in order to test out the friendliness of an environment, then tactility becomes maybe the most primordial way of finding our way through the world. The use of rice and wheat flour was therefore a choice made according to their ability to trigger specific body reactions that involved participants' engagement with their sensory response in a primal level.

#### **4.1.3 audio soundtrack**

The audio soundtrack was created by different materials I brought together and then edited with a software. Those elements comprised: *Pneumon* (2001) by Ioannis Kalantzis and sounds of birds' singing found in open resources on the internet.

*Pneumon* is an environmental work for tape alone made principally by the sound of the masts of the ships shackled by the wind, recorded at the port of Lavrion out of Athens during August 2001. My intention was to attribute these sounds as a natural living voice and respiration, giving the impression of a natural environmental lung. Moreover, a parallel sense of the interior respiration of human

lung—in Greek πνεῦμον [pronounced pneumon]—was developed. It's a fatal relation of respiration/ suffocation, between human nature and a planet who slowly fades out. (Kalantzis, 2001)

My methodology of editing those sounds into an audio piece was based on the concept of interruption and juxtaposition building up different layers. I have been inserting pauses into the sound texture in relation to the concept of *Ma*. The intention was to create an intense atmosphere and I was relying on the absence of sound as well in order to intensify it. My attempt was to experiment with the idea that pauses might support participants' focus into the quality of sound itself. I have been thus cultivating and enhancing participants' sensitivity in perceiving auditive stimuli.

Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443) was a very influential Japanese aesthetician, actor and playwright. His practice reflects his training in classical Chinese and Japanese poetry. In the book *The flowering spirit* (2010) or *Fūshikaden*—which has been considered a Noh treatise—Zeami states that “All things have a *Jo*, a *ha* and a *kyū* these are determined by the content of the performance.” (Zeami 2010, p. 85) Masakazu Yamazaki and Matisoff Susan, in the essay “The aesthetics of transformation: Zeami's dramatic stories” refer to the Japanese concept of *Jo-ha-kyū* in relation to the Aristotelian idea of a complete dramatic action as follows: “the action running through drama must have unity and completion and as a condition for this the beginning, middle and end of the action are connected in a necessary organicity. *Jo*, *ha* and *kyū* correspond to those three points (Masakazu & Matisoff 1981, p. 255) Zeami concludes that “we understand *jo* because *ha* and *kyū* come after it.” (Ibid, p.256) In an analogous way I have experimented with pauses and audio evolution throughout the piece.

Moreover, according to Michael Lazarin, “For Japanese aesthetics, harmony lies in discord and balance in asymmetry. In fact, this is the Buddhist understanding of being [...] the philosophic mind released by Noh performance is delight in absurdity and patience in obscurity.” (Lazarin 2006, p.215) In *Sky-field*, the attempt was to create some degree of dissonance among the linear construction of the art piece and the audio. Therefore, whereas the video, web of clothes and participants’ activity with rice and wheat flour blend constituted a slow pace environment for the spectator, the audio was resulting somehow misleading and ruining the natural pace of the events.

#### **4.2 Research design of *Sky-field***

*Sky-field* as a performative installation was incorporating a video projection as well. The function of the video was meant to affect the participants kinaesthetically. I have designed the video projection bearing in mind that when I (as a viewer) am perceiving a painting as well as a moving image, “I would be hard pressed to say where the painting is that I am looking at. For I do not look at it as one looks at a thing, fixing it in its place. My gaze wanders within it [...] Rather than seeing it, I see according to, or with it.” (Merleau-Ponty 1964, p.4) Participants’ gaze was meant to wave trajectories in the place attracted by the film’s evolution.

The video projection was taking up one of the walls of the space, the video of the murmurations had the duration of 52 minutes and my intent was that participants’ movement would be affected “in the manner of a bird in flight riding on the wind.” (Masakazu & Matisoff 1981, p.248) Laura Cull offers her insight into “G. Deleuze’s concept of affect which is not understood as emotion, but as pre-personal process of

‘becoming’ change or variation caused by an encounter between bodies.” (Cull 2011, p.189) In this case, the (birds’) bodies were digitalized.

Cull adds that “affect is the kind of thinking done by art [...] art— including performance—thinks by creating affects, such as the vibrations, harmonies and dissonances of literary words, musical tones, or painterly colors [...] the role of the artist is to stage affects as encounters that exceed those who undergo them.” (Ibid) Murmurations in particular depict how birds, as part of their life routine, are organized and move altogether. This is a daily practice that has a certain rhythmic cadence, pace and duration and therefore, constitutes an affect.

The mode in which I am engaging with murmurations here, is connected to a specific quality of event; to the question ‘what is a dog?’ Hijikata’s answer was “the dog is how it can move and, in particular, how it can move (differently) in connection with a child’s body.” (Ibid, p. 192) It is the quality of the atmosphere created that I was aiming to or, as Cull puts it “The reality of affects such as becoming-animal is the reality of an encounter with the coexistence of very different durations including non-human durations. Different animals have different ways of being in time which produce what lies above and below their threshold of perception.” (Ibid, p.197) We might therefore hypothesize that time perception and particular rhythm determines an encounter with an animal as affect.

Cull continues by referring to Coates Marcus, an artist that specializes in practices of becoming animal, often a bird. She describes Coates’ work as “a process based on seeking out what we might call zones of imperceptibility between the human and bird performers; areas of affective overlap.” (Ibid, p.199) In addition, Una Chaudhuri, who has been developing “an articulation of ‘zooesis’—a term that she coined, firstly to designate a broad range of activities undertaken in a variety of modes at the



intersection of performance and animal studies” (Ibid)—states that, for her, “zooesis includes the myriad performative and semiotic elements involved in the vast range of cultural and animal practices.” (Ibid, p.200) In analogy to the above, the research design of *Sky-field* incorporated the video element, aiming to enact a connection between birds’ flight with participants in a sub-conscious, pre-reflective level.

As already stated, *Sky-field* has been designed as a group experience whereas *Seabed* was designed as an experience on an individual basis and *Waste-is-land* as an experience for small groups. People were notified through social media about a performative event taking place at Pollen Studios mentioning a specific date and day-time. The only requisite was to arrive dressed in white (preferably). The reason for this choice was to foster the extra-ordinary conditions of the experience and create some uniformity that would help participants to transcend their daily life presence. In addition, wearing white clothing was thought to cause an immediate sensation of being part of *Sky-field* because of the monochromatic set up of the space.

In *Sky-field*, the dynamics of group experience has been privileged in order to experiment with the influence of the others upon the individual perception. The body of the participant is at the centre of a performative installation. “Not that possible body which we may legitimately think of as an information machine but this actual body I call mine [...] further associated bodies must be revived along with my body—others’, not merely as my congeners, as the zoologist says, but others who haunt me and whom I haunt.” (Merleau-Ponty 1964, p.2) Therefore, the compresence of the others was meant to create a kind of system in togetherness incorporating the rest of the installation elements.

The action involved in *Sky-field* was that of dividing the blend of rice and wheat flour which was spread on the white textile sheet at the floor and subsequently store it into the bags placed at the corners of the fabric. The researched state was that of absorption while feeling interconnected with one's surroundings. I am using the term surroundings in its broader sense in order to refer both to the space around the participants and as well as to the other human bodies and objects that were forming the performative installation. In my practice-based research, I have been working throughout different strands of this bond: in *Seabed* I have been focusing on *Basho*, in *Waste-is-land* I was experimenting with the embodiment of *Lifedeath*, in *Sky-field* I have been working with "Pure experience" as coined by Nishida. (see chapter 1, Immersion within my research, p.37)

Nishida explains that "Pure experience" is a state of presence interconnected with "Acting intuition" (Kruegel, 2008). In "Acting intuition", the doer is acting with and through the object instead of acting using an object as a tool. This would be also explained as a synergic relationship with the object similar to that of cyclists riding a bike and, in this sense, the bike becomes the extension of their body. Barbara Bolt, in the book *Practice as research: Approaches to creative arts enquiry* (2010) refers to M. Heidegger's notion of *handling* in order to support her position of facing art as an embodied way of knowing. By giving the example of riding a bicycle she is pointing out that all the complex organization of the body required could not be easily transferred by a handbook. Furthermore, Bolt, notes that artistic practice involves "praxical knowledge" which is a type of knowledge that can be only perceived through the engagement with materials (Dean and Smith, 2009) and which is not appropriate to be explained in an exhaustive manner with words.



**Fig. 60** *Sky-field* installation process in Pollen studios



**Fig. 61** *Sky-field* installation process in Pollen studios



Yamazaki gives another definition of this state using the example of a pianist: “When we think about music, we can readily understand this state of absorption in performance. For example, a pianist in a recital cannot create a flowing performance unless he virtually forgets about the individual movements of his fingers.” (Masakazu & Matisoff 1981, p.248) In *Sky-field*, the expected research outcome was that of creating this particular state to the participants using the action of dividing rice from wheat flour as a vehicle leading to a state of immersion.



**Fig. 62** *Sky-field* 27th September 2018, photo credits by Jordan Hutchings



**Fig. 63** *Sky-field*, filmed guided discussion after the event, photo credits by Jordan Hutchings

### **4.3 Discussion of focal points and how they have shaped my research design**

#### **4.3.1 Aesthetics and mechanics of transformation in Zeami, Nishida and Becker**

One of Zeami's beliefs was that "people cannot be controlled by that which is fully familiar. We are not entranced by that which we can totally understand." (Masakazu & Matisoff 1981, p.215). In this respect, Zeami was fascinated by human emotions which transcend the rational and researched on the modalities in which performers and their audience are going through a transformation state that exceeds the everydayness. With regards to this approach, he used the metaphor of a flower in order to speak about transformation of the self as an active process: "Form is, so to

speak, a bridge between the will and the body. In other words, the artist creates an agreement between himself and nature. And in this process of struggle with his materials and his body [...] the object of his concern is nature.” (Ibid)

Zeami, explained that there exist different kinds of flower related to different skills and abilities but mostly to their longevity:

Matters such as the temporary Flower, the Flower of the voice, and the Flower of a graceful and subtle elegance can be observed by the spectators; they are all Flowers that come forth from technique, and so are like those that bloom and thus like those that finally fall [...] As for the true Flower, the cause of its blooming and also of its falling is in the will of the actor. (Zeami 2010, p. 96)

It emerges that the actor for Zeami should ultimately be deploying both his physical and mental abilities in order to reach the “Flower”. “If you want to know the Flower, you should first know the seed. The Mind is the Flower, the seed is the technique.” (Ibid, p.97) Hence, the way to reach the Zeami’s “Flower” is through technique; however solely by activating our physical skills (body) and neglecting to put intentionality in this effort (mind) we cannot truly master it. We might therefore assume that Zeami envisions the body-mind in its organic ensemble as for the attainment and cultivation of the “Flower”.

I will attempt to build a connection between Zeami’s “Flower” and Nishida’s concept of “Acting intuition” that stands at the core of my research. Matteo Cestari in his essay “The knowing body: Nishida’s philosophy of acting intuition” teases out this term as follows:

This notion of intuition as opposed to any immediate fusion is directly connected to the rejection of the concept of a self-sufficient entity that may bypass the mediating process [...] intuition is no longer an Absolute: experience occurs in the world. It does not arise from an absolute starting point, nor end absolutely, but is an interrelated process; it is an integral part of the global whole of links which form the world. (Cestari 1988, p. 194)

Therefore, both Nishida and Zeami, point out the salience of the process of engagement with the materiality of the world as such before any change of state occurs.

Zeami in particular, “gave clear instructions concerning the ideal nature of a special kind of self. This is a self constantly involved in performance, a self-fated to perform. In direct contrast to the ‘modern self’ as conceived of by intellectuals since the Renaissance, this self was aware of being in a state of maladjustment with the real world.” (Masakazu & Matisoff 1981, p. 232) In *Sky-field*, the researched outcome of entering a state of immersivity was planned as a process that develops itself based on the participants’ relation with the materials. *Sky-field* (unlike *Waste-is-land*) was also incorporating the element of a video projection testing out whether this can enhance or not the expected effect upon audience.

In this performative installation, much attention is given to the gradual building of immersion by allowing enough time for the participants to engage with this state of presence and by intentionally creating a space that may foster this subtle experience. Masakazu and Matisoff mention that “while a painter paints an individual scene or still life, he simultaneously creates and expresses the tension of the space that envelops it. Similarly, the actor, while performing various actions spins out the

continuity tension that envelops those actions in the flow of time.” (Ibid p. 240) In analogy, in *Sky-field* attention was given not only in the mere action of the participants but to the whole setting of this action in a way that encourages and supports it in a natural and straightforward way. As for Zeami the term “Flower” is a metaphor for beauty. This term is significant to highlight that “we do not see any intentionality in flowers’ beauty.” (Ibid p.242) In this respect, it has been equally important to consider how to preserve this ‘lack of intentionality’ when designing this performative installation.

Zeami’s goal “was this marvellous passive state, or rather a strange fusion of active and passive states of mind [...] the aesthetic image is created between the purely subjective and the purely objective.” (Ibid p. 245) Zeami used the term “detached view” in order to describe this observation of the actor from outside of his own appearance (Ibid). However, “detached view” is not seen as an analytic way of dealing with details “since a living thing is not an assemblage of parts” (Ibid p.247) but rather the audience, “entranced [...] forgets about the efforts of performer [...] It seems as if a natural dynamic simultaneously controls everyone in the place.” (Ibid p.249) The quality of attention that Zeami is speaking about here, has striking similarities with “Acting intuition” concerning the fact that the performer is asked to be both intuitive and aware. This quality is in line with the researched outcome of immersivity in *Sky-field* as it has been described in chapter 1 (see *Immersion within my research*).

*Basho*, which is one of *Butoh-body* core elements, has often called our attention to the surroundings of an event. Nishida’s notion of *Basho* as locus, place, is not referring only to its spatial characteristics as such. *Basho* is a field of enveloping forces, where time is infinitely dynamic and different strands of consciousness



coexist (Kasai 2000, p.358). Moreover, “in *Butoh* dance, not the dancer as subject is dancing, the place itself is dancing and the dancer will be created by the place in which he is dancing.” (Kasai 2000, p.358) This very co-dependence between the body and the place, or the self and the world has been acknowledged by Zeami.

Zeami sought a kind of chosen freedom through his “detached view.” (Ibid, p.245)

One modern philosopher that tackles this issue is the German phenomenologist Oscar Becker (1889- 1964) under the concept of ‘*Getragenheit*.’ (Ibid, p.252)

Masakazu and Matisoff explain that “Becker recognized this quality as particularly characteristic of artistic activity and he described it as ‘a condition of being carried’ [...] according to Becker, this state of ‘being carried’ resembles what people in classical times thought of as the unique movement of the stars in a gravity-free state.

An artist can complete a creation only in this state.” (Ibid p.253) Here, the metaphor of a gravity-free state is pointing out—under a different perspective—the synergic modality between two or more forces, or the absence of any friction; something like the unison movement of murmurations.

#### **4.3.2 Liminal and nonsensical states: *Katharsis*, *Flower* and the *Sublime***

*Sky-field*, *Seabed* and *Waste-is-land* are aiming for the immersivity between the participant and the actual performative installation. As explained also in chapters 1 and 2 this state of presence is calling for a different state of attention. I would like to link immersion effect to principal concepts arising from Greek theatre and Japanese theatre—which is here seen as precursor of *Butoh*. Lazarin with reference to Aristotle describes the cathartic effect in ancient Greek drama: “I would like to call

attention to the states of mind that accompany the most intense and therefore effective, cathartic experiences: astonishment (ἐκπληκτικός; Poetics 1460 b27) and wonder (θαυμάσιος, Poetics 1452a4).” (Lazarin, 2006 p.209) Lazarin adds that according to Aristotle, this should occur “at the climactic movement and follow naturally from the construction of the plot and the motivation of the character.” (Ibid) Finally, he is arguing that usually this was managed by the introduction of absurdities. Here, I am interlinking “katharsis” to the qualities that immersion may have potentially and deepening into its nonsensical nature.

Furthermore, Lazarin is referring to the fact that the word “wonder” was considered by Plato as “the origin of all philosophy. Plato compares the basic emotion of a philosopher to suddenly stumbling into a well while observing the stars.” (Ibid) This imagery illustrates that there is a turning point into a process that occurs after active and conscious engagement with it. This quality is also present at the *Butoh-body* with regards to its interconnectivity with its surroundings (*Basho*) but also in *liminal* experiences as described by Turner. (see chapter 3, Defining Immersion: Zen modalities of handling material in ‘liminoid’ activities, p. 121) Lazarin remarks that “the importance of astonishment and wonder argue that *Catharsis* is essentially a separation from the ordinary state of affairs: transcendence [...] the ultimate aim of dramatic performance is to move the audience to a new and presumably higher level of consciousness.” (Ibid)

Lazarin argues about the connection between Aristotle’s apparent focus on plot: “for every drama has spectacle, character, plot, language, melody, and thought but the most important of them is the arrangement of the events [the plot]” (Aristotle 1450a Poetics 6) and Zeami’s emphasis of character which are here seen within broader

context. Lazarin is pointing out that the Zeami's "Flower" refers to "an inner power of spirit and mind" that contemplates both internalization of a role and its externalization, (Lazarin 2006, p.210) Zeami is developing a system of cultivating and reaching the "Flower" which is also seen as transformation, so we might assume (again) a turning point taking place throughout a process.

This turning point is described by Suzuki as "crisis" (from the Greek word *krinein* [κρίνειν]: to separate, to judge) that further leads to "katharsis" when he refers to *Butoh*. Aristotle's definition of Tragedy sheds light to the term "katharsis" as follows: "tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and possessing magnitude; in embellished language, each kind of which is used separately in the different parts; it is a mode of action and not narrated; and effecting through pity and fear the katharsis of such emotions." (Aristotle 1449b Poetics 6) Hence "katharsis" is an emotional shift induced in the spectator throughout the embodied action of the actor. In analogy, the concept of "Acting intuition" that has shaped the research design of *Sky-field* is based to the embodiment of a physical action that is expected to induce to a state of immersivity. In this sense, I compare the quality of immersivity to that of Katharsis in so far as they both refer to a psychophysical state that occurs as the result after a turning point is reached during an embodied activity.

Suzuki identifies "a sense of crisis in Hijikata's work that seems to be lacking in contemporary performance." (Lazarin 2006, p.217) "Crisis" is here described as "the point at which the body will lift itself up to health or fall into the abyss of death [...] the "crisis" is the moment at which an action of purification/ purgation succeeds or fails. It is katharsis." (Ibid) We might thereafter reassume that both Aristotle (Katharsis) and Zeami (Flower) are aiming at something critical to be experienced by their audience: a liminal experience.

The nonsensical nature of the aesthetic experience is unraveled by Kant in his third Critique (Critique of Judgment) wherein “Kant gives the imagination, in its “free activity of free play an artistic role.” (Krummel 2018, p.257) Kant is reflecting upon the aesthetic product that is “exceeding the bounds of conceptuality, cannot be fully translated into language symbols and induces in its audience an experience that likewise exceeds linguistic and conceptual boundaries.” (Ibid) Kant clearly defines the judgement of taste as aesthetic commenting that: “The judgement of taste, therefore, is not a cognitive judgement, and so not logical, but is aesthetic—which means that it is one whose determining ground cannot be other but subjective.” (Kant 203 The Critique of Judgement part 1) According to Krummel, Kant further problematizes the creative activity of imagination by introducing the experience of the *Sublime*: “in the experience of the *Sublime* one experiences awe and anxiety before the powers of nature externally or humanity within, that transcend the bounds of any purposiveness.” (Ibid) *Sublime*’s quality of non-purposiveness will become clearer in connection to *Sky-field* in the section of the recurrent themes gathered by the participants’ experience and in particular in reference to goal-oriented actions. Also, for Takayama Chogyu, in his essay “Observations on aesthetic pleasure”:

the explanation of the characteristics of aesthetic pleasure in terms of disinterestedness, is not a recent one in the history of aesthetics [...] in Kant, author of *Observations on the feeling of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1764) the distinguishing feature of the judgment of taste is that the satisfaction it reports is disinterested [...] the good involves the concept of purpose, of what the object judged ought to be, while when we find an object beautiful we need have no definite concept of it. (Takayama 1999, p.101)

Kant is making a distinction between finding pleasure in the beautiful and “delight in the good” since the latter is “coupled with interest.” (Kant 208 *The Critique of Judgement* part 1) Kant discusses that in order to reckon something good, we must have knowledge of it, hence we “must have a concept of it.” (Ibid) By contrast, that is not a requisite in order to find beauty in a thing: “Flowers, free patterns, lines aimlessly intertwining [...] have no signification, depend upon no definite concept, and yet please.” (Ibid) Based on those reflections, we might assume that another characteristic quality of what we call aesthetic experience is that of the absence of any connection to a specific and identifiable aim from us. It is crucial that this aspect (lack of goal) is taken into account within the research design of *Sky-field*.

#### **4.3.3 *Transillumination* and the transformation of the social body in *Butoh***

Sabine Sorgel, in her book *Dance and the Body in western theatre: 1948 to the date*, among else refers to Jerzy Grotowski’s work on performers’ training. She mentions that “Grotowski emphasized craft as a form of spiritual work on oneself, not unlike ancient techniques of mysticism.” (Slowiak and Cuesta 2007, p.17 quoted by Sorgel 2015, p.63) She further adds that what Grotowski called *Transillumination* or *trance*, are terms connected to “the emergence of different consciousness, as a perceivable manifestation of changing energy, and are derived from the precise repetition of the acting score.” (Sorgel 2015, p. 63) This resonates to the concept of “Acting intuition” coined by Nishida (1973) and it is interlinked with “Pure experience” (see chapter 1,

Immersion within my research, p. 37); “Acting intuition” is here seen as the conscious and proactive process embedded within our bodily engagement with the materiality of the world. This process leads us to the state of “Pure experience” which I here compare to Grotowski’s “Essence” deriving from “Transillumination.” (Ibid, p.64)

“What Grotowski describes as ‘Essence’ [...] is an experience of flow embedded in the mind’s circular relationship that transitions between self and void [...] as with flow experiences in general, here too, time is suspended in an instant of duration where our awareness of past and presence are merged.” (Ibid) Hence, the nature of “Essence”, is by-passing social conditioning in a similar way *Butoh* training shapes the performer’s presence. *Sky-field* is here seen as a similar timbre of experience taster concerning the researcher’s intentionality towards the participants’ body-mind state. In this performative installation, task-oriented actions have been used as a vehicle that hopefully fosters participants’ spontaneous engagement (improvisation) with the materials. Grotowski has considered physical movement improvisation important as a stage that allows the actor to “break away from what he referred to as the social mask.” (Ibid) In this sense, *Sky-field* might be seen as the de- conditioning stage that frees up creativity and precedes the (imaginary) spectacle itself as a final form.

For Sorgel “Grotowski’s training prepares the body to enter a state of heightened physical awareness which allows the performer to deliver the total act.” (Ibid, p.66) The performers are deliberately cultivating an openness— “somewhat radiant”— towards each other and including their audience in this process (Ibid). She concludes that “theatre in the 1960s staged the possibility of communal belonging in interdependence with the universe and natural environment” (Ibid, p.72) —whereas

Grotowski's period of Paratheatre—that shared similar area of inquiry—occurred during 70s. Those approaches bring us again to the discussion of New materialism and phenomenology's placement of the body at the centre of the world's perception. In this respect, Sorgel is mentioning that Merleau-Ponty “compares the body to an artwork in the sense that pictures or music are also understood as the sum of their component parts such as sounds, colours and instruments.” (Merleau-Ponty 2004, p. 174 quoted by Sorgel 2015, p.87) This point of view guides our attention to a modality of understanding the body in its totality instead of adopting a more analytic approach as would happen in the scientific field.

Underlying the importance of being in between other bodies (human and non-human), she mentions that according to Merleau-Ponty, what is salient is the modality according which—two or more—conscious subjects co-exist. “How they use their bodies, the simultaneous patterning of body and world in emotion.” (Merleau-Ponty 2004, p. 220 quoted by Sorgel 2015 p.88) This feeling, for Merleau-Ponty, is comparable to the “rhythm patterns of the tides or the subtle diastole of our pulsing heart beats as source of organic life.” (Ibid, p. 332-333) Again, we notice that the focus falls into the organic way that presence in an almost intermittent modality unfolds within time-space frames and this might hopefully highlight *Sky-field's* relevance as a method of inquiry.

Ferracini and Rabelo, in their essay *Always recreating* refer to the fact that “the creative action territorializes itself in the performance of a present act of composition.” (Ferracini and Rabelo 2014, p.111) They argue that creation takes place among “1) a territory of subtlety, 2) the coexisting paradox of control and lack of control and 3) an active receptivity of action of composing in/ within this present event.” (Ibid) In addition, they cite Grotowski's term “Transillumination” insofar as it



concerns their own training to the actor: “we are not teaching him (the actor) something; we try to eliminate the resistance of his body to this psychic process. The result is the elimination of the time lapse between an inner impulse and an outer reaction [...] impulse and action are concurrent.” (Grotowski 1987, p.14 quoted by Ferracini and Rabelo 2014, p.111) Hence, in order to reach creativity, it is not possible to ignore its historical and social frame which directly affects the resistance of actor’s body to the psychic process of improvisation. This means that creative process is always a product of its own spatiotemporal environment and as such should take into account its influence when it comes to the research design of a creative experience.

Ferracini and Rabelo place our attention to the fact that many of the forces that are activated during creation are invisible. “This complex plan is formed by visibilities (effectuated bodies) and invisibility (rays and transilluminations) for they arise crossed by dynamic forces that carry the bodies in that territory.” (Ferracini and Rabello 2014, p.113) They argue that those invisible forces do not pre-exist but are “generated by these same bodies [...] Bodies and forces generate bodies and forces in an increasingly complex dynamic.” (Ibid) This perception of the stage (and/ or performative installation) as a space where infinite potentialities manifest themselves is resonating with the concept of *Basho* —often metaphorically seen as the Place— which is intrinsically related to “Acting intuition”. Ferracini and Rabelo state that “this materiality, or concrete invisibility draws itself on the chaotic power of the encounters (intra/ inter-bodies).” (Ibid, p.116) Hence, the encounter of bodies and intrabodies activates the place here seen as an ensemble of time and space.

For them, this “is an ontogeny that blurs the borders of what would be a collective and a unique body.” (Ibid, p.117) In *Sky-field*, the compresence of the others has

been crucial in order to enhance immersivity as an effect. What Nishida describes as “Acting intuition”, is pointing our attention to all the potentialities that this particular modality of connecting to our environment has to enact “Pure experience”/ “Essence” for Grotowski or ontogeny for Ferracini and Rabelo: They explain that “for this ontogeny to occur, diving in the present of the present an opening from/ to experience is necessary [...] This listening [...] this receptivity to the cloud of invisibility, not only to feel it passively but to act with it entails [...] an entire reception + action.” (Ibid, p.118) Accordingly, *Sky-field*’s research design consists into thoroughly planning all temporal and spatial coordinates of the process and considers (to a certain degree) their potential effect upon the generated event itself.

#### **4.3.4 The bond between Live Art actions and a deeply mediatized culture**

*Sky-field* differentiated itself from *Seabed* and *Waste-is-land* by the fact that it employed a video projection. However, all performative installations forming this practice-based research to date have included a registered audio input. Is it possible to speak about live art actions in the contemporary practices without taking into account that technological means will be acting as a support or creative agent? Following Philip Auslander in his argument regarding liveness; “Initially mediatized events were modelled on live ones. The subsequent cultural dominance of mediatization has had the ironic result that live events now frequently are modelled on the very mediatized representations.” (Auslander, 1999 p.10) Auslander notes that despite this fact, “Performance theory continues to characterize the relationship between the live and the mediatized as one of opposition” (Ibid, p.11) In this respect,

in *Sky-field* I am inquiring upon the modalities with which the video projection might eventually enhance or disrupt the bodily engagement of the participants.

According to Auslander, “Live performance now often incorporates mediatization such that the live event itself is a product of media technologies.” (Ibid, p. 24) He is quoting Jacques Attali’s description of the current cultural economy in which, performance locates itself currently whereby a distinction is drawn between representation and repetition as normative trends of that economy (Auslander 1999). Attali states that “representation in the system of commerce is that which arises from a singular act; repetition is that which is mass-produced. Thus, a concert is a representation, but also a meal à la carte in a restaurant; a phonograph record or a can food is repetition.” (Attali 1985, p.41 quoted by Auslander 1999, p.26) Therefore, Attali is suggesting that in order to inquire upon liveness, we should rather direct our attention to the way that an event is crafted—and experienced—instead of focusing to the presence or absence of the technological elements that form it.

Furthermore, Auslander is referring to Michael Kirby’s definition of performance art and experimental forms of theatre as “non-matrixed representation, in which the performer does not embody a fictional character but merely carries out certain actions that nevertheless can have referential or representational significance.” (Ibid, 28) More light is shed to the relation between Live art actions and mediatization in Kirby’s statement that “in non-matrixed representation the referential elements are applied to the performer and are not acted by him.” (Kirby 1984, p.100 quoted by Auslander 1999, p.28) Kirby in his essay “On acting and not-acting” claims that: “Although the performer seems to be acting, he or she actually is not. Nonmatrixed [sic] performing, symbolized matrix, and received acting are stages on the continuum from not-acting to acting.” (Kirby 2002, p.42) Hence, here, once more the attention is

placed in the ways these performers (in this research's case, the participants) are relating themselves to other human and/ or non-human bodies in order to enact an action. In this sense, according to Kirby, since acting is not any more the case, all props might become legitimate collaborators—even the video projection.

However, Auslander is not arguing that “all instances of live performance art reflect an incursion of the mediatization in the same ways or to the same degree” (Ibid, p.32) to conclude that scale could be considered as one differentiating factor. *Sky-field* is unfolding in an intimate setting and this preserves a subtler effect upon the perceivers. But as Auslander explains, mediatization “pervades even these small-scaled events” (Ibid) drawing also from Benjamin's discussion upon the “auratic” (auratic from the Greek word αὐρά which means either breeze or aureole) and the mass-reproduced ones (Benjamin, 1986 [1936]). Benjamin, in his essay “The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction” (Ibid), emphasizes that “human sense perception is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well.” (Ibid, p.31 quoted by Auslander 1999, p.34) According to Benjamin, the “auratic” or unique experience is gradually banished as distance has been overcome in mass culture: more effective media of transportation and television broadcasts bring closer what before was far away. As Auslander highlights, “even in the most intimate of performance art projects in which we may be only a few feet away from the performers, we are still frequently offered the opportunity of watching the performers in close-up on video monitors.” (Ibid, p.34) In the latter case mediatized performance is competing with live art action upon the degree of primacy and intimacy it can offer to the audience.

Different drama theorists as Robert Edmond Jones and Robert Blossom have consequently argued about the liveness in mixed media environments. Jones (1941)

would see the film representing the unconscious and the live actors representing consciousness. This ensemble for Jones was considered to ensure its complementary function towards different aspects of the psyche. On the contrary, for Blossom (1966), who might see the film as representing consciousness and the live actors as representing corporeality or physical existence there was a competition among them. Blossom acknowledged that this conflict among live bodies and filmed images in a mixed-media performance setting was somehow inequitable since the film might result inevitably more compelling. Auslander concludes that “we now experience a mixed-media work as a fusion, not a con-fusion of realms. A fusion that we see as taking place within a digital environment that incorporates the live elements as part of its raw material.” (Ibid, p.37) Auslander argues in a way we are more accustomed to the compresence of mediatized and the live in this historical moment.

Among performance theorists there is quite often a dispute about the integrity of live art and its corrupted nature when mediatized. Peggy Phelan is a performance theorist who argues about liveness in performance art. She believes that “performance’s devotion to the now and the fact that its only continued existence is in the spectator’s memory enable it to sidestep the economy of repetition.” (Ibid, p.39) Nevertheless, Auslander has an opposite position considering the fact that any cultural discourse could nowadays stand out of the ideologies of capital and reproduction which characterize our media-based society. He mentions that there is still a strong tendency to foster the tension between live performance and technologized forms: “live performance is often identified with intimacy and disappearance whereas media with a mass audience, reproduction and repetition.” (Ibid, p.41) Nevertheless, for him, repetition is not an ontological characteristic of

either film or video; the latter are bound to deteriorate due to their material nature exactly as live art actions that are strictly connected to the vulnerability of our corporeal self might easily fade out.

Ultimately, the current state of live performance is that of being wrested from its “traditional status of being auratic and unique.” (Ibid, p.50) Auslander proposes that live forms of art are functioning in relation to their mediatized environment, therefore the “live is an effect of mediatization” (Ibid, p. 51); the very enchantment of live performance in a mediatized culture is principally fostered by the desire for live experiences which is also a product of mediatization. Finally, it is arguable that both liveness and media are interconnected and interdependent. Either in competitive or collaborative manner, when co-existing in mixed-media environments they support each other by being different or moreover they do canalize our attention towards the mechanics than to the narration of the event. In the following section of this chapter, where I go through the data analysis gathered by *Sky-field* and *Sky-field 2*, I will argue about the use of video within a performative installation. Based on the data analysis of this research installation, I reckon that video projection can be proven challenging in relation to the setting design if its proper materiality as a medium is not considered sufficiently.

Giulio Jacucci and Ina Wagner, in their essay “Performative uses of space in mixed media environments”, are quoting Schechner claiming that “while anything can be studied as a performance, something is a performance when social context and convention say it is.” (Schechner, 2002 quoted by Jacucci and Wagner 2005 p.3)—as an example, see also 3.6, p.168 Alastair MacLennan’s ritualized actions. According to Jacucci and Wagner, Happenings emerged out of the evolution in structure and complexity of traditional environments; “Kaprow defines this approach

to Happenings as being through ‘action collage.’” (Ibid p.4) They argue that some mixed media environments explore “immersive and technologically innovative environments diverging from the conventional screening formats.” (Ibid p.5) Therefore, again, what is being pointed out here is the use of the medium rather than the medium itself in order to speak about its influence upon artistic practices. In addition, Jacucci and Wagner underline that “light has always been a central artistic medium. Light is used for structuring visual fields, for multiplying visual options and for producing atmospheric qualities.” (Ibid, p.7) They add that multi-mediality might actually affect all the senses and they discuss the recent use of sound also in architectural design. For them “the dialogue of experiences and concepts was embodied spatially with projections.” (Ibid p.17) Hence, they maintain that “lighting and projections contribute to dematerializing the stage” and support the use of video and light design because of its enriching quality to add pictorial representations and dynamic symbolisms. Ultimately, they sustain that “the spatial distribution of lighting and projections results in a spatial collage of physical action and media.” (Ibid, p.22) *Sky-field* would like to test out the potentiality of the multi-mediality to enrich immersion and attempt to define parameters that would offer positive results in that direction.

#### **4.3.5 Enacting immersive awareness in contemporary practices; the hauntological body as in-between state**

Deborah Middleton and Nicolás Núñez, in their essay “Immersive Awareness” (2018) are teasing out the training process of *El Ensueño de los Árboles* (2017). In this performative piece, Núñez, deployed some strategies in order to help participants to

achieve a state of active contemplation including meditation and stillness in alternation with group action. Middleton and Núñez refer to Josephine Machon's discourse about agreeing to a "contract" among participants and performer(s): "a safe place must be established, and mutual trust generated." (Machon 2009 quoted by Middleton and Núñez 2018, p.218) They explain that this special agreement "entails maintaining silence; cessation of normal, non-verbal social contact; paying attention to the environment; moving softly and unobtrusively; and making contact with others in extra-daily ways." (Ibid) Finally, the ideal state to obtain would be simultaneously deep inner meditation and full outer attention, which would constitute what they define as immersive awareness.

Sky-field 2 structure shares to a great degree this way of approaching the performative event whereby the research design clearly included a phase of explanation ('signing the contract'), a stage of body-mind attention (inner mediation) and a final part of shared creation process (group action out of the daily habitual way of interaction). Machon remarks that in order to identify the historical trajectories that guided the birth of immersive theatres, it is important to mention "the role of Grotowski's work in Paratheatre, Theatre of Sources and Art as Vehicle [...] which sought to offer participants what Grotowski described as "experiences of direct perception." (Machon 2009, p.38 quoted by Middleton and Núñez 2018, p. 219) Moreover, in order to define with accuracy, the work of immersion, it is important to note at this point that it is not about "a chaotic plunging into raw experiencing nor is it a process of entering into a withdrawn introspection; rather it is a state of aligned inner and outer wakefulness." (Ibid, p.229) This subtle effect—which is very fragile and subject to environmental influences—, is addressed via energetic form.



Therefore, everything matters with regards to the creation and maintenance of this liminal state of presence.

Jonathan Marshall, an interdisciplinary scholar in the field of Theatre and Performance who has extensively written about Butoh, coined the word “hauntology”. This word is a “neologism produced by the splicing of two apparently incompatible terms, namely ontology and haunting.” (Marshall 2013, p.62) Ontology, is a branch of philosophy that builds around concepts of being and presence whereas haunting signifies an elusive and spectral combination of appearance and disappearance. Therefore, hauntology reflects especially “this gap between representation and experience.” (Ibid) Besides, the liminal hauntological body is by nature formless: “drawing on George Bataille and other European avant-gardists, Hijikata frequently identified Butoh as a dance that defies structure or shape” (Marshall 2013, p.70). As Marshall suggests, Bataille saw Butoh as “an iconography of the formless” (Ibid) since its outward forms are shaped by the experience. This definition resonates with what occurred to the participants in *Sky-field* as they were moving towards the formation of a collective body framed by their common experience—without trying to represent something.

#### **4.4.1 Data analysis of participants’ feedback after *Sky-field***

In order to analyze the data gathered from *Sky-field*, I will adopt a qualitative research analysis (Cresswell, 2013) and distil the participants’ comments into relevant topics that shape my research. Finally, I will arrive to the evaluation of the research project and plan my next version of it addressing the modifications needed.

#### 4.4.2 Recurring themes:

**Goal oriented skills development: obsession, copying, being effective: individualistic**

In *Sky-field*, the task (dividing the rice from the wheat flour and storing it to a bag) required a great concentration from the person that was going through it. The action was quite repetitive, and the participants were asked to engage both their tactile, visual and intellectual abilities. Besides, the amount of the rice and wheat flour was quite substantial for the time given and this transferred to the participants an urge to speed up. What occurred in *Sky-field* was quite surprising for me: people manifested an underlying competitiveness and started to develop different techniques in their attempt to be efficient. This created a slight tension in the atmosphere. For this reason, many participants might be joining the action but stepping back after a while. Besides, the nature of the task (goal-oriented) did not allow an opening of participants towards each other, fostering creativity and playfulness. In some cases, participants with a background in creative arts, such as Participant 1, 7 and 11 have mentioned the intention to respond more creatively to the piece but they did not effectively pursue their impulse. I reckon that the rules set for this 'game' were preserving and encouraging a focus into the result of the action, rather than allowing the participants to sense the journey and trigger a creative response within them. By contrast, my previous research installation, *Waste-is-land*, was offering a looser frame to the participants; in that case the instructions have been: 'divide the clothes from the soil and place them in different positions around the installation space'. According to my observations and data analysis, this latter type of instruction, remains open-ended, aiming to an aesthetic result. This fact does not create any

sense of stress or urge to be efficient therefore is not engaging a rational way of thinking.

**Body awareness: physical pain and different body postures, relations with the texture of the rice and wheat flour, shapes and patterns**

Participants' relation with their body posture and way of acting with the material was quite varied. They had different body preparation in base to their age, physical training and condition of the day. In some occasions, such as that of Participant 1 and 9, they have mentioned arriving to *Sky-field* after a long day and bringing with them tiredness and stress. In their case the time needed in order to relax and slowdown was necessary in that case and this might have altered their perception of the duration of the experience. Since more time was needed in order to enter into the slower flow of *Sky-field*, the body posture would start to be painful and cause sore to the knees. According to Leder (1990), pain or illness is one of the conditions that leads us to our body awareness. In this respect, I consider that the body posture was enabling the participants to develop their body awareness throughout the task and to maintain their attention to the body. Hence, in this sense, the immersivity of the piece was enhanced by the kneeled body posture in togetherness with the physical action. The texture of the rice and wheat flour, was enjoyable for some of the participants and repellent for others. There have been some strong reactions to the texture of it from Participant 3 that had an immediate physical response of rejection towards it. This negative predisposition to a material has however been linking the participant's attention to her body stimulated by the immediateness of a body reaction. Therefore, *Sky-field's* physicality manages to reconnect the participant to a primordial level of

experience which is considered as necessary in order to access the *Butoh-body* state. Participant 11 referred to the shape of the rectangular sheet as associated to a negative previous experience. The ability of the artwork to link to past moments and give access to memories (mostly physical ones) is bringing forth the impact that the materiality has in our shaping and perceiving of experiences. In this case, materiality is used as a vehicle to evoke past memories of the participants engaging with body's physicality.

### **Shifting attention: transitions, Boredom- Detached- Engaged- Immersed- Complete**

Concerning the attention and state of presence of the participants, different strands of experience unfolded. Participant 1, 5 and 7 referred to the fact that their quality of presence developed from being initially confused, then bored and gradually opening towards the different aspects of the piece. Participant 7 in particular described the piece as giving the opportunity to engage with different speeds and fields of action that kept her in a state of on-going interest. Participant 12 referred to the processual nature of the art-piece since the action was not repetitive but allowed different patterns to emerge, including participants copying each other and striving for a better result. Birds flying and clotheslines illustrated an organic evolution pace according to Participant 13. For Participant 11, things seemed complete as they were and for Participant 5, things became concordant after a while. There were different levels of perception occurring and building upon each other and this is an element that relates to our lived experience modalities of existence: we constantly interconnect elements and scenarios in order to build our own reading of what is perceived as our reality.

Passage from different states to another is resonating with the transition within *Butoh* dance, which according to Fraleigh, (2010) is a metamorphic dance insofar it relates disparate embodiments and lingers on their interlinking as such.

### **Playfulness against goal-oriented action, holy thing, seriousness**

As discussed in theme 1, in *Sky-field* often playfulness was discharged in favor of a more serious, socially regulative and uniform approach. As Participant 1 mentions, at some point he had an impulse towards acting with the rice in a more communicative and ludic way: “I wanted to do one for you one for me.” Participant 1’s initial impulse was soon placated after a few attempts that did not appear to encounter an encouraging reaction from the rest of the group. According to Participant 3, there was a strong ritualistic element in the work that prevented people from being completely free in their interpretation of the action. Moreover, Participant 3 mentioned that this particular attitude was initiated by the researcher, who was present and actively participating to the action. Participant 2 described the event as a “holy thing”, later adding that it recalled for him a Buddhist ritual he had experienced in a past time. The atmosphere and disposition of the participants opened towards being more creative at the moment that the researcher handed handfuls of rice to some of the sited witnesses in an attempt to invite them to step into the action. The role of the researcher midst the performative installation was crucial and acted as a pole of imitation for the doers.

There has been a moment, towards the end of the action, where doers became more active and filled the installation space. There have been some shy attempts to break the action into “non-sense”-making such as piling up the blend of rice and flour,

moving it across the canvas sheet and blowing towards it in order to clean the rice in a quicker and more approximate approach. This initiative moved participants away from their striving for efficacy and details. The term non-sense is referring to an intermediate state of being creative, therefore within the premises of the *Butoh-body*. As Cull states, "Hijikata's dances, in particular, elude any fixed identification of the performing body in terms of age, health, gender, sexuality or species [...] Hijikata uses dance not to represent the movement of other bodies but to locate new and unfamiliar ways of moving evoked by an imagistic process." (Cull 2011 p.190) In *Sky-field* there has been no *Butoh-fu* acting as visual imagery offered to the participants; the video projection was here acting as visual stimuli that was connecting their experience in time and space. The non-sensical quality of *Butoh* has been explained previously in this chapter (discussion of focal points).

**Not given/ wrong instructions: White and not white clothing/ confusion and division**

During the guided discussion after the event, participants mentioned that upon entering, they have been told that they should not take part in the action if not dressed in white. This has been the result of non-effective communication between the researcher and the staff of the Pollen studios that were hosting the action. The flyer of *Sky-field* was inviting people to preferably come along dressed in white clothing however without excluding people from being part of it if they were not wearing white. This has been interpreted wrongly and led to misleading instructions that influenced the impact of the art-piece. Besides, this lack of clarity created two different groups of people according to their clothing (dress code): the white and the

non-white dressed participants. Participant 9 mentioned: “I felt entitled to be part of it because I was dressed in white.” The dress-code factor augmented the vagueness of stimuli received during the event and introduced a societal mode of acting.

In social activities differentiation or hierarchical ranking occurs and this is usually communicated with a dress code. This kind of division and perception is not coherent with a *Butoh-body* perspective where our body is understood in its primal and pre-social essence closer to natural and New materialism keys of reading life in large: Bennett, states that:

For some time, political theory has acknowledged that materiality matters. But this materiality most often refers to human social structures or to the human meanings “embodied” in them and other objects [...] dogged resistance to anthropocentrism is perhaps the main difference between the vital materialism I pursue and this kind of historical materialism. (Bennett 2009, p.17)

In this sense, hierarchy and ranking are related to our social mode of understanding reality whereas New materialism pushes towards a non-hierarchical perspective upon life which acknowledges objects and humans in a synergic relationship.

The effective way to deal with the colour instructed dress-code task would be either to provide white clothing to the participants or to avoid adding the clothing parameter at all. This outcome describes a group dynamic issue that was not the expected outcome, but nevertheless shed light upon the nature of research question under a different perspective. Finally, this misleading experience has enriched the research design at its later stage (*Sky-field 2*).

### **Contrast between events: different speeds and stimuli/ too much, annoying**

Participant 10 mentioned that the impression given was that of having two different events unfolding within the performative installation: one was related to the physical action taking place at the centre of the installation space and the other to the associating linkage of the video, audio, action and clotheslines as a system that made sense. As a consequence, participants' experience was imaginarily divided into a first group that focused into their bodies without connecting effectively with the rest of the space and a second group that was more contemplative and far away from connecting to their bodies via an action.

Participant 7 and 13 referred to the plethora of stimuli as being positive and enriching as an experience, encouraging the viewer to seek for different meanings, association and stimuli. Participant 12 expressed annoyance from the compresence of those disparate elements that were asking for attention without offering themselves for an immediate interpretation. Participant 12 explained that for her, this was the reason for entering into the physical action and remaining there active almost for all the duration of it. For some of the participants, the physical action was working in an antagonistic relationship with the rest of the elements in the room. This contrast could be interpreted as provoking confusion or asking for a deeper engagement in order to be understood. This was reached by some of the participants occasionally and developed through time as explained in theme 3.

Similarly, the immersion evoked by the *Butoh-body* contemplates and acknowledges the unfolding of different micro-worlds or events within the world of the performer-audience. In *Sky-field* however, there were different types of attention and perception involved and this created a fragmentation of the piece. Because of the multiplicity of



the elements and different ways that participants have engaged with the piece (rice-pickers and witnesses) there was no uniformity in their quality of perception. Perception shifted from a body-based awareness that tended to be recessive rather than aesthetic for the rice-pickers to an empathic attitude towards them (by the witnesses) and/or mere contemplative and conceptual engagement with the piece seeking for connections and sense making of the art-piece.

As Zarrilli (2004) explains, the recessive state of presence is moving inwardly to our own bodily state with a reduction of our awareness to what occurs around us. He would connect the recessive state of presence to that of being sick or in pain. (Zarrilli 2004, p.660) Whereas the aesthetic state of presence—which resonates with immersive presence—would be the combination of an inner and external awareness simultaneously. In the case of aesthetic inner body-mind: “this body is that realm of extra-daily perception and experience associated with long-term, in-depth engagement in certain psychophysical practices or training regimes—yoga, the martial arts, acting/ performing per se, or similar forms of embodied practice which engage the physical body and attention (mind) in cultivating and attuning both to subtle levels of experience and awareness.” (Ibid, p.661) In the latter case of aesthetic ‘outer’ body Zarrilli applies the aesthetic inner body-mind state to a body that performs referring to the intermodality with which the actors are constantly oscillating between their own inner sense of self and that of the character that they enact. (Ibid, p.264) Zarrilli’s is here mapping the body’s different way of inhabiting space.

The fragmented type of attention activated in *Sky-field* is not related to the *Butoh-body* state of presence where, a visceral and kinaesthetic approach are privileged. Kasai in his essay “A Butoh dance method for psychosomatic exploration” (1999)

refers extensively to this fact. All participants were seeking to develop associations and “questions in their head” (Participants 2, 5 and 7 clearly state this) between those disparate elements while acting within the performative installation was counterbalancing this tendency. As a result, we might assume that the multiplicity of visual and auditive stimuli might enhance a conceptual and mental approach of the given experience which is tendentially read as information that has to be combined in order to arrive to sense making. On the other hand, the bodily involvement within the piece if goal-oriented leads to the appraisal of efficiency, hence fostering an instinctive strive towards survival, leadership and control within the group dynamics.

### **Dominance of video and sound/ music was immersive**

The above-mentioned effect is related to the dominance of audio and visual inputs to the physical action. This has been stated by Participant 2 describing the video as having a “hypnotic effect” during the performative installation. Participant 5 and 6 noted that the music was very immersive and almost drew their whole attention. Audio and video input had a stronger effect upon the witnesses because of their ability to transfer the viewer to a different spatial-temporal dimension. The clotheslines were mainly used as a visual filter of the physical action as participants were facing the space through the voids whereas the physical task was calling for rice-pickers’ attention in the here and now. These different modalities of interaction with the art-piece were added to the fact that no immediate connection between four elements was provided in a rational and immediate modality to be grasped. The ensemble created confusion and caused a need to focus to different aspects of it in an attempt to find one’s own location within it.

In this respect, *Sky-field* by being thought-provoking, has fostered the proactivity of the participants, while failed into offering a cohesive environment for the majority of them. Besides, the research design of the space did not take into account the number of participants whereas in previous research installations (*Seabed*, *Waste-is-land*) this was carefully taken into consideration. The amount of people was greater than the capacity that Pollen studios could host, guaranteeing a certain fluidity in the performative event. Besides, the fact that the video projection had determined participants' positioning in the space, has restricted the participants' options within *Sky-field*; according to Participant 3, video projection has discouraged people from sitting in front of the wall where film was projected. In addition, because of the clothesline division of the space, people were forced to take a firm position in the space instead of feeling free to move around.

#### 4.5 Evaluation of *Sky-field*, planning of *Sky-field 2*



**Fig. 64** *Sky-field 2*, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019, Belfast Campus

Based on my observations, the data analysis of the participants' feedback and my qualitative evaluation of it, I planned to incorporate some changes to the second version of *Sky-field*. *Sky-field 2* took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019 at dark room, Belfast Campus as part of the Friday seminars for BA students. Dark room is a small-sized (approximately 5m x 3m) blacked-out space designed to provide the premises for a video projection. Thus, *Sky-field 2* would be an experimentation within a 'easier to control' space. The size of the room is a factor that restricted the number of the participants to 10 persons each time. *Sky-field 2* has been scheduled as a small-scale group experience taking into account the dimensions of the space and preserving a degree of intimacy.

Before the event, I briefly introduced the activity and handed the information sheet to the participants in person. This would ensure that information and instructions about how to act within *Sky-field 2* are communicated in a clear way to them in order to avoid misunderstandings occurring. The data would be collected with a written questionnaire and a filmed discussion after the event. From the last experience of feedback collection in *Sky-field 1* I concluded that the filmed guided discussion can offer a significant tool to the understanding of the collective experience of the piece. Therefore, I adopted this way of accessing people's feedback in combination with the written questionnaire in order to go deeper into their individual experience of the piece.

Concerning the dress code, I would opt to offer all participants white overalls to wear over their own clothes. This was thought to preserve a kind of uniformity and anonymity within the performative installation. Hopefully, no division or classification would occur because everybody would look like the same. White colour was maintained because it facilitated the video projection upon the participants' bodies.

Moreover, I have been evaluating different ways that would be more effective for facilitating the video projection of the murmurations to merge with the physical action. In *Sky-field 2* I would be projecting the video of the murmurations on the canvas sheet laying on the floor where the physical action will take place. The aspiration was that this would create one main pole of attraction for the participants and would minimize the possibilities of causing confusion or a sensation of contrast/lack of coherence. Furthermore, in *Sky-field 2*, the action consisted on transferring the blend of rice and wheat flour from the textile bags to the canvas sheet instead of dividing and storing it (which was requested in *Sky-field*). The desired outcome was that giving the participants an open-ended task would favour their predisposition

toward a more creative flow which is related to the *Butoh-body* notion. Participants were explicitly encouraged to collaborate with each other while staying sensitive and responsive to the audio and visual input of the piece.



**Fig. 65** *Sky-field 2*, getting prepared for the performative installation

The body posture that they would be invited to adopt was the same as in *Sky-field*: bent knees, crouching, staying close to the ground. However, in *Sky-field 2* there was more fluidity in movement because the task did not require a high level of concentration, and stillness instead and it allowed them to collaborate, interact among each other. Another variation in *Sky-field 2* would be the decision to exclude the white clothes web from the research setting in order to minimize the stimuli offered to the participants. In addition, the audio input would be offered in a lower volume in order not to interfere in a significant way with their experience.





**Fig. 66** *Sky-field 2*, moving together

In *Sky-field 2* the duration would finally be marked by the task itself—whereas in *Sky-field* there was a fixed timescale of one hour decided at the very start. I estimated that if considering the space (dimensions), quantity of material and the number of participants (10 each time), the action would last approximately 40 minutes. From my experience in *Waste-is-land*, I observed that in this time lapse, participants' awareness is heightened without psychophysically entering a state of boredom or tiredness. The duration of the experience is one of the core elements that has to be carefully considered. The reason for the strategic planning of the duration is that

...these bodily transformations are not accomplished via an intellectual 'flash of understanding' (Wittgenstein 1953 quoted in Leder 1990, p. 32) but through something akin to a sedimentary process. Over time, that which is acted out, rehearsed, and repeated seeps into one's organismic ground...incorporation thus has a temporal significance. (Leder 1990, p.32)



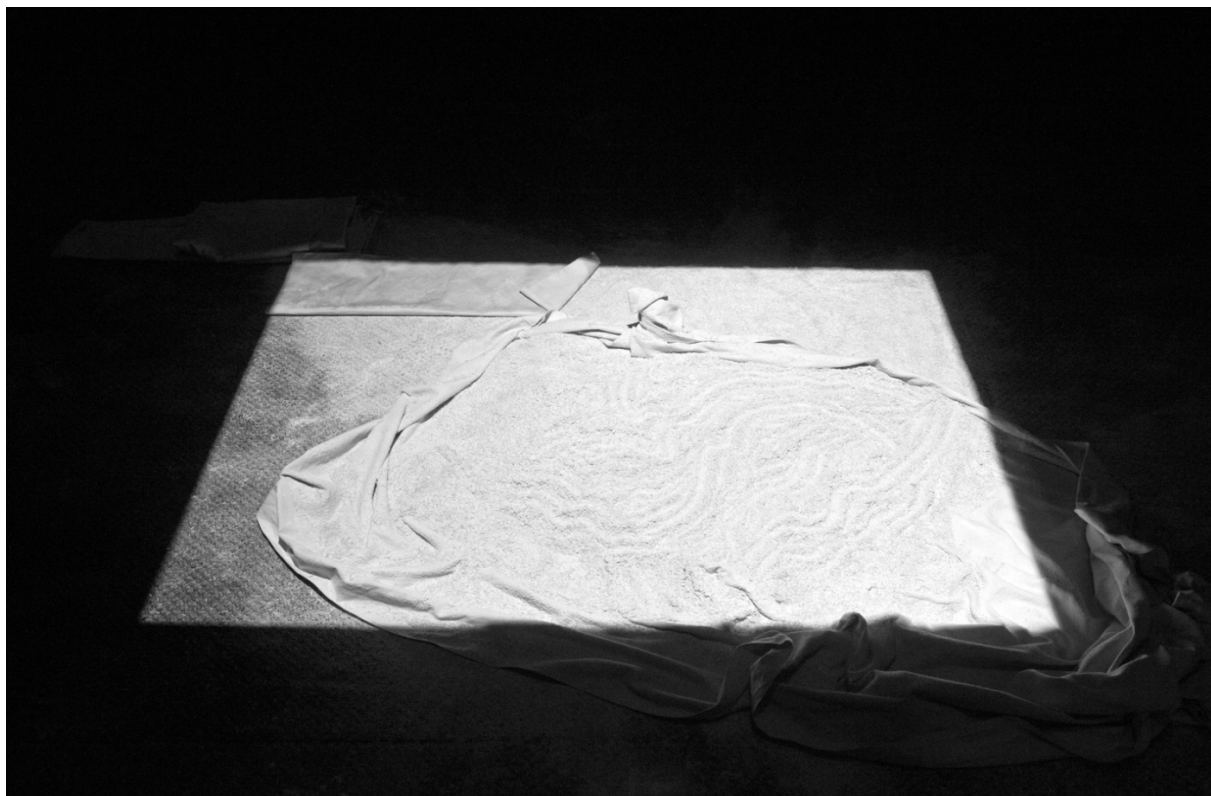
**Fig. 67** *Sky-field 2*, the body-scan stage

Moreover, in *Sky-field 2*, I would add a body-scan experience as a preparatory body-mind awareness stage before the participants' call into action within the performative installation. The body-scan used was a 30-minute recording of a guided mindfulness meditation by Veronica Ellis. In the guided mindfulness meditation, the practitioners have been listening to Ellis' recorded voice offering a set of instructions concerning their breath and body posture. I have obtained access to this recording after my participation to her course on mindfulness a couple of months before. My experience during mindfulness by Ellis was that of reaching a deep connection to my inner



bodily sensations and posture. For this reason, I considered this would be an efficient way to canalize participants' attention to their own sensitivity and, at a later stage to their surroundings. During body-scan, participants were asked to take a comfortable sitting position, either laying down or fully supporting their back on a chair, connect to the ground with their feet, and possibly keep their eyes closed. Body-scan would guide them to place attention to different parts of their body and focus their awareness in their inner sensations.

Michael Lazarin, in his essay "Katharsis, Flower and Darkness in Greek drama, Noh and Butoh" explains how in Noh theatre, actors are actually sharing their pre-stage experience with their audience. Lazarin invites us to "consider the long bridgeway between the dressing room and the stage proper in a Noh theatre" in order to understand the fusion between space and time in Noh performance (Lazarin 2006, p.215). He further describes this liminal state of the Noh actor while traversing the bridgeway as follows: "for quite a long interval (both spatial and temporal) the actor is neither here nor there. We see the performer but not the performance; the bridgeway entrance is a kind of yogic exercise, an exhalation and inhalation of atmosphere within which the performance will take place." (Ibid) Similarly, in *Sky-field 2*, participants were invited to undergo an in-between state in order to cultivate an openness and directionality into their attention towards their inner body-mind sensation through body-scan experience. This liminal time-space has been already discussed under the term *Ma* (p. 73). Lazarin refers to Zeami's vision of transcendence by using the "sun shining at night" as metaphor of the highest excellence. (Lazarin 2006, p. 214) He argues that "this is expressed by the Chinese character *Ma* which depicts the sun (or perhaps the moon) shining through a gate." (Ibid)



**Fig. 68** *Sky-field 2*, the enabled space



**Fig. 69** *Sky-field 2*, filmed guided discussion with BA students

## Data analysis of participants' feedback after *Sky-field 2*

*Sky-field 2* was experienced by two different groups with the following structure:

- a. Meeting the participants in room BB009, delivering a brief introduction to my research topic and methodologies, explaining what will happen during the event.
- b. Distribution of white overalls to participants to put on over their own clothing.
- c. Moving into the performative installation room (BB010) in silence and picking up a position into the space, around the projection.
- d. Body-scan experience that lasted 30 min, participants were either sitting, laying down in stillness.
- e. Audio of *Sky-field 2* kicks off and the action begins to grow gradually (duration of 30 min more or less)
- f. After the event arrives to its end, participants gather again at room BB009 and they are given the written feedback form to complete. In addition to this, a guided filmed discussion upon their experience followed with first group.

In this section, I will reflect upon the recurrent themes emerging from written feedback, filmed feedback and researcher's observations in *Sky-field 2*. My analysis will be mainly adopting a qualitative approach towards what occurred. It is important to notice that, I have taken part in all iterations as a participant as well as a conductor and this determines my research positionality in the last two performative installations as participant observational (see also 3.5, p.148 Research positionality in *Waste-is-land*).

The recurrent themes emerging out of *Sky-field 2* have been:

### **Body- scan experience**

All participants defined body-scan as a positive and helpful stage that helped them to transition better to the space and get prepared before they step into the action. They mentioned that it has been relaxing and helpful to make them more aware about their body and breath. A few participants mentioned that it took them some time before they relaxed within body-scan mainly because they were carrying tensions and thoughts from the rest of the day with them. Some referred to the fact that the room was not spacious enough in order to feel comfortable and this is an aspect that I will discuss again in the evaluation of *Sky-field 2*. Also, keeping the posture in stillness might be painful for some and prevent them from completely surrender into the non-doing. I might have to prepare better the space for a similar experience in the future in order to welcome the unpredictable factor of all abilities, ages and physical background of the participants. However, since the aim of body-scan is not only to relax but to listen to oneself inner sensations, realizing that a body part is in pain is not necessarily something negative but brings us closer to rising our body awareness (see also 4.4, p.208 Data analysis *Sky-field*). Only one participant mentioned that the duration of body-scan was too long, and another expressed the desire that the body scan would be delivered in that moment by the researcher instead of listening to a recorded version. This is an interesting option since a live delivery of the body-scan would be more coherent with the atonement to the now that the performative action requires right after. But would also mean that there is a clear line between the researcher/ conductor and the participants which I would

rather avoid in order to preserve a less biased and rule-regulated approach to the action.

### **White clothing and moving in togetherness**

Hassel notes that *Butoh* performance is traditionally conceived as a ritual where performers often choose to stay in close contact with the audience “by the means of using tight spaces, often no bigger than a living room.” (Ibid, p. 55) *Sky-field* took place in a large room without control over the number of participants, whereas *Sky-field 2* was enacted in a small-sized blacked out room where participants (limited to a number of 10 persons) were bound to bear to a certain proximity. This fostered the sensation of being part of an out-of-the-ordinary event that did not fall within the premises of traditional theatre—hence marking a clear demarcation of roles between audience and spectacle. Moreover, participants mentioned that wearing the white overalls helped them to overcome inhibition and enhanced their feeling part of the installation as well as part of the group. They reported that over time they felt more connected to the actions occurring and did not perceive any leadership to occur but a conjoined movement. Two participants of the second group mentioned that they had the sensation that things became animated quicker than they would feel able to sustain. Presumably, this occurred because in the second group in particular, most participants had a background in performance art and this speeded up the development of the piece. Participant 8, group 2 mentioned that “It felt as though all bodies, human and non-human merged and flowed as one.” This sensation of moving altogether was fostered by the material and simplicity of the action itself.

## **Engagement with the materiality of the performative installation**

Participant 1 from group 1, during the filmed guided discussion mentioned that “the material did not make me feel very clever.” This comment referred to the fact that rice and flour are so basic that they do not create any expectation or stress about arriving into a result. All participants mentioned that they enjoyed the texture of rice and flour and one person noted that this would cause an asthmatic reaction to her so she had to keep a certain distance from it. Participant 7 from group 1 mentioned that it was enjoyable to watch the blend of rice and flour descending as it was lit over the projection. The video itself in a way guided the interaction according to Participant 2, group 1. Participant 7 from group 2 mentioned that: “I liked the playfulness with the shadow and the light while playing with the rice and flour under the projector.” The research design of the setting enabled the participants to sense the video projection as a whole with the action itself. There was no disruptive influence from the video as it was incorporated to the structure of the performative installation and did not create an antagonistic pole of attraction as occurred initially in *Sky-field*. (p. 208) Participant 5 from group 2 mentioned that “The body began integrating actually with the artwork.” Therefore, immersion was achieved at least to a certain degree within the event.

## **Time perception throughout the event**

For most participants, time flowed quite slowly during the body scan and speeded up or ceased to exist during the action. A few mentioned that time was quick during body-scan and went slower later. This difference supposedly relates to the individual

psychophysical disposition of the moment as well as to the body-mind training to which persons are previously subjected to. Participant 8, group 2 mentioned that “The sense of time went by very quickly, in both the body scan and action, or you could say it ceased all together at times as non-existent.” The participant had a deep engagement with this experience and embodied the desired outcome of immersion. This did not occur to the same level for everybody, but the overall sensation was that of being part of a bigger whole at the end which constitutes a satisfying result for the given time and space coordinates of *Sky-field 2*.

### **Absence of a clear goal: sense of freedom and creative impulse**

Schechner notes that the experimental or avant-garde might result as rule-breaking whereas the majority of performative activities (including rituals, games, sports and aesthetic genres of dance, theatre, music) are sharing several basic qualities: “1) a special ordering of time, 2) a special value attached to objects, 3) non-productivity in terms of goods and 4) rules.” (Schechner 1994, p. 8) However, even avant-garde — which is considered to be the most experimental art-making— is only apparently a rule-breaking activity “since experimentation has its own rules”, most of them already brought into light in the research design of the performative installations that form this research (Ibid). In fact, after enacting *Sky-field*, and analysing the feedback of the participants it clearly came out that a significant reason for failing to foster creativity in that case was setting up a very precise task. On the contrary, in *Sky-field 2* the task was more explicitly described as a sensitive and aesthetic response to the setting. Participants responded to this request by developing more fluidity, no

competitive attitude or leadership stress developed among each other. This had as a result that they were finally opening themselves towards their surrounding including interaction with each other. Participant 4, group 2 mentioned that “I like the freedom we had to do whatever.” Hence, setting up solid boundaries in order to preserve freedom has been the main task in this case. A very clear connection with childhood, natural sites and process-based practices as cooking or baking arose from the majority of participants. Participant 7, group 1 mentioned that “It reminded me of playing with sand at playschool. Freeing and fun, communication through movement not language.”



#### 4.7 Contextualization of *Sky-field* within practitioners' practice



**Fig. 70** Kaprow A. (1962) *Words* [live performance] New York: Smolin Gallery

Allan Kaprow is well known as the initiator of Happenings in the 60s. He began as a painter, but his interest soon turned to theoretical domain, primarily focusing into concepts of space as it is subjectively experienced by the viewer. His influential essay "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock" (1958) was calling for end to craftsmanship and permanence in art. On the contrary, he invited artists to shift their attention to non-concrete and ephemeral modes of creation. As already discussed in chapter 1, the movement of Happenings arose in the same historical period with *Butoh* and *Gutai*. They have been often characterized as a protest towards the Second World War, an attempt to reconnect to basic and primal aspects to life instead of bearing to a product and consumerism-oriented society.

Kaprow is of interest in the current research because of his attention towards assembling different mediums and his innovative approach towards the spectator relationship. *Sky-field* is a more intimate and controlled performative event in relation to the large scale, often quite transgressive situations that Kaprow generated involving both indoors and outdoors activities. However, our practices share a common approach with respect to the fact that the notion of artistic authorship is being highly challenged. For example, in Kaprow's piece *Words* (1962) the audience is taken into a journey which could be better described as a multi-sensory experience. The importance of this piece stands to the fact that it is based in the responsibility of the viewer to become part of the creative process. In analogy, *Sky-field* is an assemblage of different mediums including light, audio and video projection that is however activated fully only through the participants' actions.



**Fig. 71 & 72** Kaprow, A. (1961) *Yard*, New York: Martha Jackson Gallery, photo credits by Ken Hayman

Another element that is crucial both in Karpow's work and the performative installations created in the current project is that they both involve a score and both are responsive to their site-specific elements. In this sense, they would tendentially be reproduced if their pillar parameters are sufficiently taken into account. *Seabed*,

which has been hosted at Magee Campus in an underground studio, reconnects with the experience of being under the sea level. *Waste-is-land* was addressing the passage of life-death and therefore was situated at Belfast Campus's Glass box which allowed the work to be exposed to natural light and its fluctuation. In this case, *Sky-field* required an intimate and blacked out space where the lights and projection could have a full impact upon the viewer (both Pollen studios and dark room were sufficiently blacked out).

Kaprow's seminal work *Yard* (1961) was exhibited at *Environments, Situations, Spaces* event and consisted of a junk yard full of tires. This was an immersive environment with which audience was invited to interact deploying playfulness while staying within Kaprow's prefixed boundaries. Since 1961, the *Yard* has been often revisited following the score of the original Happening, most recently in France at the Museum of Contemporary Art (CAPC).

Claes Oldenburg, another American artist of the same period that engaged with the Happenings practice, "distinguished them between emotional and rational camps." (Ursprung 2013, p.48) Ursprung states that according to Oldenburg, the emotional camp was rooted in an Expressionist tradition close to the aesthetics of German Expressionist film and Surrealist environments often inspired by Antonin Artaud's theory of theatre. "By contrast, the rational camp took its lead from Cage's Expressionism which paved the way for Kaprow's Happenings." (Ibid) Ursprung notes that however the Happenings were a rather loose collective throughout the world, "the improvised, semi-ironic, semi-serious formation of structures by the members of art networks led to a specific aesthetic that saw the emergence of the multiple, inexpensive and easy to transport artwork." (Ibid, p.49)





**Fig. 73** Kaprow, A. (2013) *Yard revisited* [live performance] Bordeaux: CAPC

Ursprung comments that Kaprow's use of the human body, including his own body and the participants or performers, was entirely conventional (which lays in contrast with the *Butoh-body*). He points out that the interesting aspect of the work stood at "the way that human bodies in his events related both to one another and to the



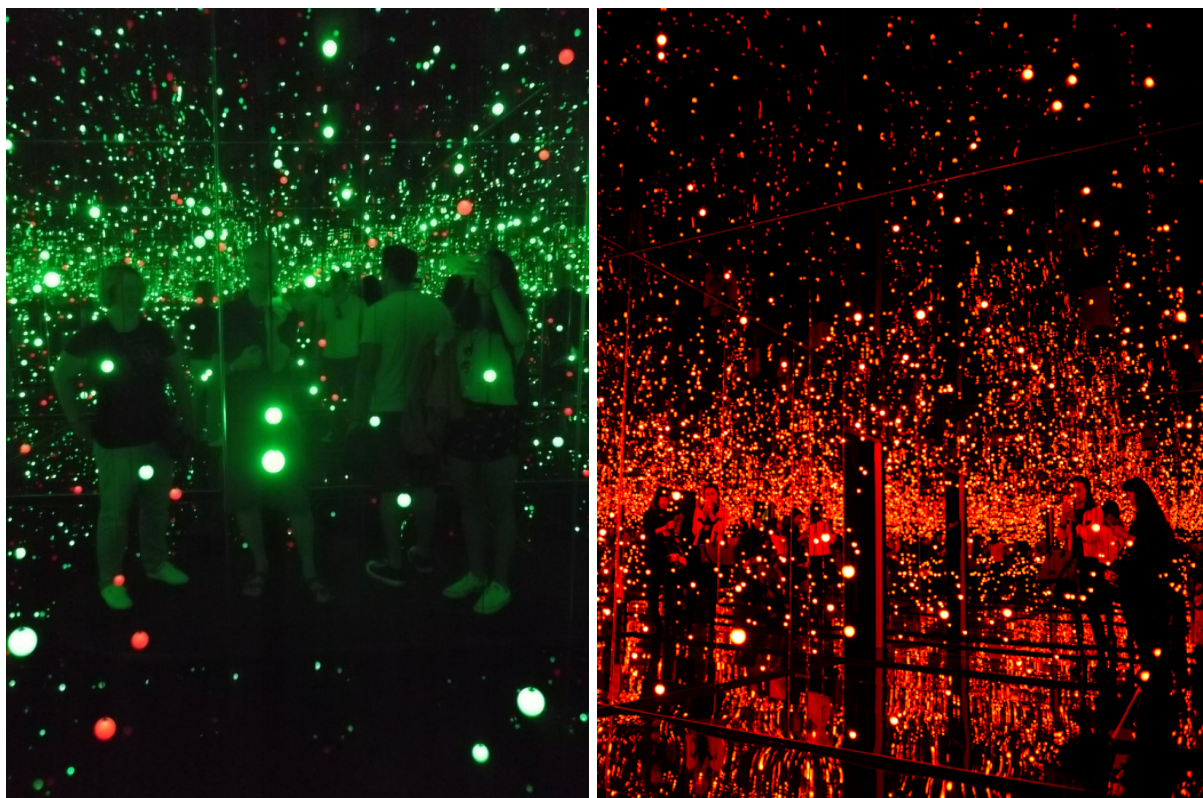
space around them, with specific reference to the power relationships among them."

(Ibid, p.51) This is more evident in the Happening *the Calling* (1965), that was enacted by performers that were positing voluntarily themselves to the role of a victim.



**Fig. 74** Kaprow, A. (1965) *Calling* [live performance], New York: train station

In *Calling*, the performers were first wrapped up and consequently left alone amid passengers in a train station or hanged upside down from trees in a forest calling out the names of their perpetrators. This dynamic relationship between the work of art and its audience was a form of interaction that "marked a new departure in the exhibiting of art." (Ibid, p.55) Participants in Kaprow's Happenings had often the sensation that something beyond the contingencies of the art world was occurring, positioning the Happenings' experience closer to that of a ritual or existential connection encounter. This resonates with the *Butoh-body* experience with the main difference that in the latter case, the body is addressed in its wholeness as a psychophysical unity overcoming conventions.



**Fig. 75 & 76** Kusama, Y. (2017) *My Eternal Soul* [installation art] Tokyo: National Art Centre

Kusama Yayoi was born in 1929 in Matchumoto City, Japan. She is a sculptor, painter, writer, installation artist and performance artist of the same period as Kaprow. "In 1975 she moved to America and began to show large paintings, soft sculptures and environment works using electric lights." (Blackmore 2009, p.67) Kusama is well known for organizing various happenings that involved participants applying polka dots to each other or to their environment under suggestive light effects. Mami Kataoka explains that "Kusama's hallucinations caused her to experience her own life as a dot or a particle of the universe." (Kataoka 2009, p.33) Stephanie Rosenthal adds that in her installations, "viewers lose their orientation, one way or another, and—in a metaphorical sense—find themselves caught up in a network of neurons and synapses." (Rosenthal 2009, p.19) Like Kaprow, Kusama has had several retrospectives around the world where she is exhibiting new or old works of her.

Midori Yamamura discusses this phenomenon as an artistic movement that took place in the late 60s in the US where different installation artists were experimenting with particular set ups. In this respect, he is quoting Timothy Leary's article "The Molecular Revolution."(1966) In this article, Leary asserts that "exposing a person to a peculiar environment created by an amalgam of sound flashing lights and projected images could generate visions similar to those experienced through LSD by activating dormant parts of the brain." (Leary 1966 quoted by Yamamura 2015, p.156) He adds that Leary argued that transformative experiences of this type could ultimately modify "person's perception of the world, which in turn could lead to social change." (Ibid) Also, for Yamamura, "one goal of the psychedelic light shows was to alter the spectators' normal process of perception through the lighting effects." (Ibid, p.152) Here, we observe the overlapping orientation of altering

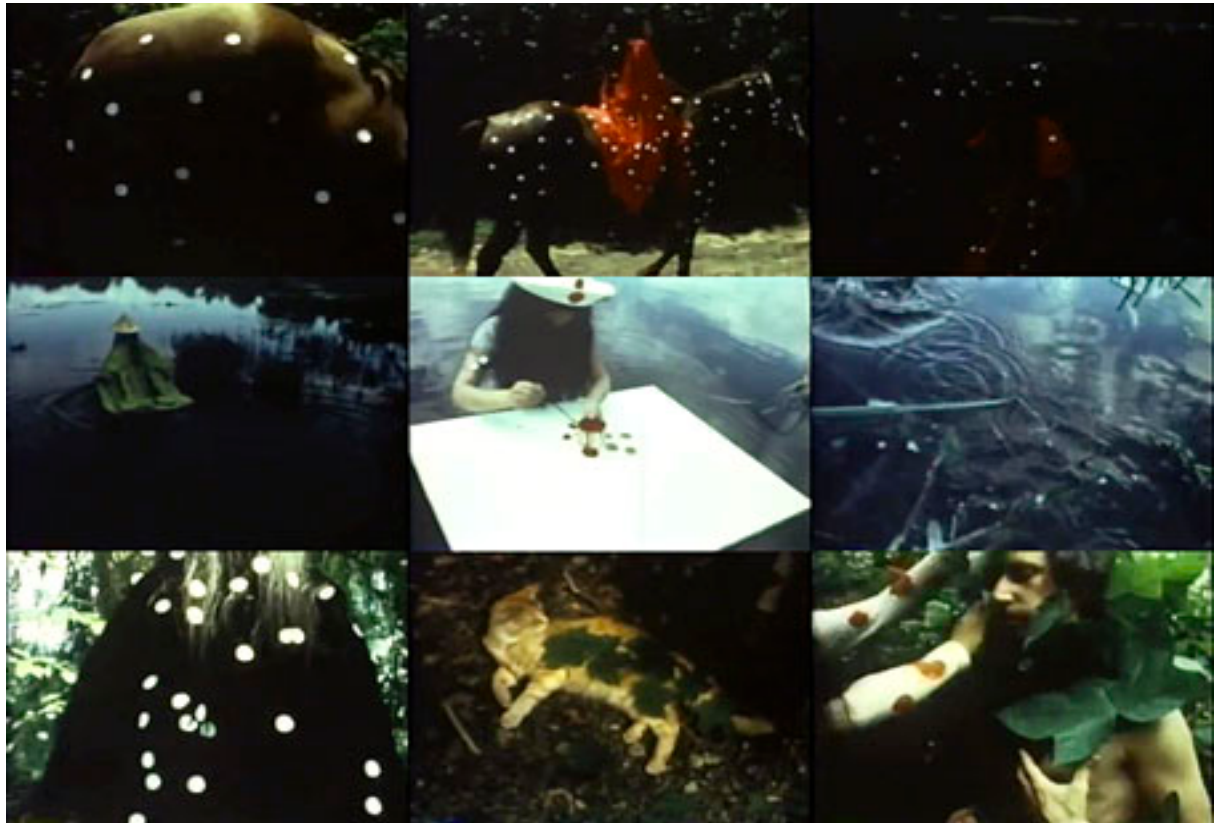
participants' state of presence: in Kusama's practice this was obtained through light effects whereas in *Sky-field 2* throughout a set of psychophysical activities within a carefully designed environment.

Kusama is most known for her short film "Self-Obliteration" (1967) which was filmed by Jud Yalkut. In the film we see Kusama and various friends cavorting in typical underground-movie fashion. The main indicator of the artist's involvement being her sticking polka dots and leaves onto everything she encounters around her: trees, people, cats, horses, even a river. Later on, there's more polka-dotting at some kind of body-paint happening inside one of her mirrored rooms. According to Yamamura, this film "comfortably fits into the context of psychedelic culture" and adds that it would be easily categorized as a "synesthetic film aiming to induce mind-altered states in its viewers." (Ibid, p.152) In this respect, Yamamura compares Kusama's work to Levinas's concept of face within his idea of infinity: "what Levinas considered a face cannot be characterized as consisting in recognizable features, such as nose, eyes or a forehead but must be understood in the immediacy of an encounter as an artefact of nearness." (Ibid, p.66) In a similar way, Kusama's polka dots interventions call for an inclusive approach towards a merged reality.

On the contrary, in *Sky-field* the use of the light and video projection has been shaping the event itself but did not play the core role. *Sky-field's* setting was mostly designed as embracing and accompanying the spectator, but more attention was placed to the physicality of the action and participants' interaction. In a way the installation was fostering the effect of undergoing to a subtle transformation of the inner feelings of the perceiver, a finer atonement to the bodily sensations while at the same time encouraging major sensitivity to body's surroundings. I would differentiate the effect that *Sky-field* was pointing at from Kusama's work concerning their



intensity and the consciousness evoked to the participants. However, would certainly note a certain affinity between *Sky-field* and Kusama's work concerning the subject, its aesthetics and the mediums adopted by her in attempt to re-positioning of the self within the world.



**Fig. 77** Kusama, Y& Yalkut J. (1967) *Self-Obliteration* [film] New York

Bill Viola is a video artist whose art “embodies an intense bringing together sensory life and experience. Viola’s key ideas include the human body, spirituality and transcendence; the forces and cycles of nature, birth, life, death and memory.” (Hanhardt 2013, p.10) According to Hanhardt, Viola has constantly tried to test out video itself as a medium through those ideas. Usually, his works depict a natural transformation or involve the undergoing of the human body into different stages in contact with primal sources (often water) or the staging of the body’s ageing. In the video the *Passing* (1991), we assist an assemblage of scenes varying from his son’s

birthday to the portrail of himself in his forties until his own mother's death. The video is filled with images of water that contrast with stark, moody, desert landscapes. In those scenes, Viola appears as a restless sleeper as well as a man underwater. For Viola, "all video has its roots in the live" (Viola 1995, p.158) and through his works he is embodying this very encounter with life.

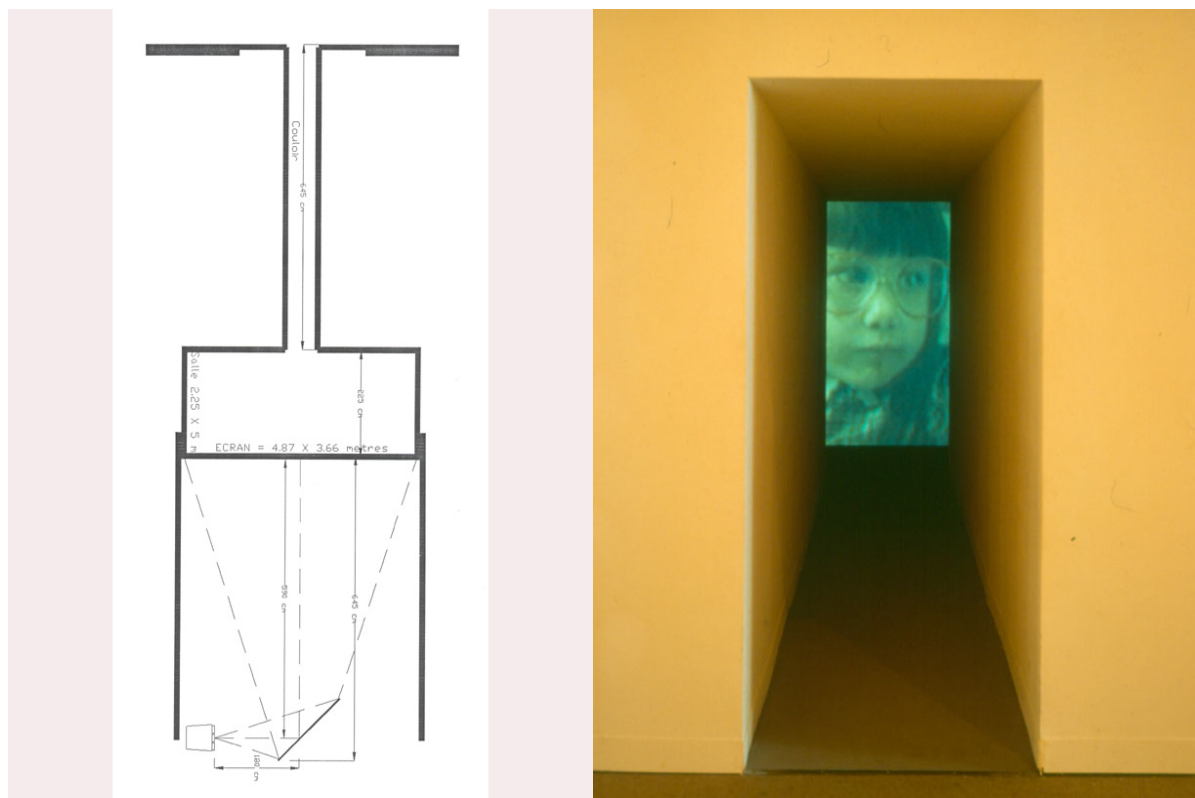
Viola explains that for him "the video image is a standing wave pattern of electrical energy, a vibrating system composed of specific frequencies as one would expect to find in any resonating object [...] The video image is a living dynamic energy field, a vibration appearing solid only because it exceeds our ability to discern such fine slices of time." (Ibid) Hanhardt comments that Viola's interest in conveying "bodily experience and expressing inner feelings in his art followed from his investigations into world religions and their spiritual texts." (Hanhardt 2013, p.15) Viola often considers the moment of confronting an artwork almost as if it was an individual encounter that demands "a primacy of perception, an open child-like state of vulnerability and emotive sensitivity." (Viola 1995, p.170) Therefore, we might assume that Viola is perceiving the fruition of an art piece as a pre-cognitive experience that could bound viewers together in a primordial level. This approach brings his art close to the theoretical background of the *Butoh-body* and its demand for a primal experience that leaves outside the so-called social time. As Kasai notes, "Butoh dancers explore the impact that 'social time' has on our bodies. As we age, we learn what types of movements are acceptable, expected [...] we learn to suppress impulses [...] the dancer transitions from 'social time' to the slower 'body time' allowing stimuli to call him or her in ways that most of us fail to hear and then respond to." (Kasai 2003, p.262)



**Fig. 78** Viola, B. (1991) *Passing*; In memory of Wynne Lee Viola; [Videotape] Washington: Smithsonian American Art Museum, photo credits by Kira Perov

In *Passage* (1987) which was exhibited at MoMA in New York, the temporal aspect becomes central also in the way that the work is displayed in the space. Viola refers to the physical aspect of this video-installation describing the work as “being an architectural structure enclosing time.” (Hanhardt 2013, p.113) The installation comprises two projections in separate rooms whose architecture has been designed accurately by the artist. Hanhardt describes the work as a “hybrid between the forms of installation and single-channel videotape [...] constructed in the physical form of the archetypal emblem of transition and transformation...” (Ibid, p.112) Therefore, it appears to be crucial for Viola to design and shape the physical journey of the participants in order to convey a specific experience as well as to alter their time perception by slowing down the pace of his videoworks in editing process. The experience of Viola’s participants is carefully staged but, in a way, subordinated to

the duration of the video. Hence the duration of the audience's experience is not considered in its autonomy: as a result, Viola is ultimately imposing his time-space frame upon the spectator. However, *Sky-field 2* deploys video as a medium that links physically and kinaesthetically the participants, leaving thereafter to them the complete control of their collective experience which is unique since it can never be repeated in the same way: every enactment of *Sky-field 2* was determined by participants' subjectivities and their interrelation among each other in this particular setting.



**Fig. 79** (left) Viola, B. (1987) *Passage* architectural design sketch

**Fig. 80** (right) Viola, B. (1987) *Passage* [video installation] Paris: Collection Centre Georges Pompidou

Christiana M. Tiches, in her article “The urgent earth-embracing art of Olafur Eliasson” at the online magazine Artspace, mentions that “much of Eliasson’s appeal derives from his direct engagement with the viewer’s senses.” (Tiches 2014) She

explains that in Eliasson's majority of work he often placed "a natural element in an unexpected gallery setting" and by doing so he has encouraged the viewer to contemplate how they experience their surroundings (Ibid). Besides, Eliasson's work stems from a desire of raising awareness on ecological crisis and is not related to a romantic view of the nature. Often his work is teasing the audience and invokes a finely crafted false sense of sublime mixed with doubt and guilt for the current ecological situation.



**Fig. 81** Eliasson, O. (2007) *Beauty* [installation art] (1993), San Francisco: Museum of Modern Art, photo credits by Ian Reeves

One of Eliasson's first works was *Beauty* (1993) which consisted of a simulated rainbow inside a gallery made with misted water and a light bulb. In his conversation with the Swedish art critic Daniel Birnbaum, Eliasson says that "without the viewer



there is in a way, nothing [...] I consider the works as sort of phenomena producers, like machines, or stage sets, producing a certain thing in a more or less illusory way [...] the piece *Beauty* made it obvious that the spectator is the central issue.” (Birnbaum 2002) Birnbaum then argues that *Beauty* has a very subtle effect: “if you step a little bit to the left or the right the piece disappears, the set-up is there but the phenomenon is gone.” (Ibid) He continues by saying that some of Eliasson’s pieces initially “lure the spectator into a romantic position of believing in something or rather being a part of an overwhelming almost natural experience only to find out a few seconds later that it was part of a machine.” (Ibid)



**Fig. 82** Eliasson, O. (1997) *Your sun machine* [installation art] Los Angeles: Marc Foxx Gallery

For *Your sun machine* piece, Eliasson cut a circular hole in the gallery’s metal roof and this allowed a beam of light in. The result was a shaft of light drifting slowly and

steadfastly across the walls and floor “charting the inexorable passing of time.” (Grynsztejn 2008, p.130) Grynsztejn remarks that “Eliasson evokes precisely this possibility of the sublime only to hinder its functioning. The natural phenomena are always marked as fabricated and the generations of the sublime are thereby demystified and revealed as if in scientific demonstration.” (Ibid, p.131) She believes that Eliasson induces the spectator’s visual processing of the aesthetic equation partially. This way, he is offering his viewers the opportunity to observe the generative workings of human vision. Eliasson is “interweaving body and room, external events and internal sensations.” (Ibid)

Therefore, we might assume that Eliasson is deploying natural phenomena under a phenomenological approach in order to demystify them and convey an ecological awareness message. Whereas, in *Sky-field* -as for the rest of performative installations generated in the current research- the nature is present in order to guide a process-based approach towards the body. The video projecting birds in flight would like to induce the participants to this organic pace of movement and act as a bond among their own interaction. Similarly, the organicity of the material used (rice, flour) has been aiming to the activation of their tactile experience as such. So, in a way, *Sky-field* is using natural processes both as its means and end: the projection of murmurations and the setting of raw materials are both related to natural processes; whereas immersivity is a gradually gained state of presence (process) that occurs when we enter in syntony with the materiality. The aim is triggering a psycho-physical union between bodies and stimulate their ecological awareness of being part of a bigger whole but not to convey directly messages that concern climate changing or species’ disappearing. This would require another layer of attention from the participants, closer to the cognitive fruition and sense making

which, according to the current perspective, would be still bound to the social being, therefore operating against the *Butoh-body* notion.

Grynsztejn comments that Eliasson describes his work as “devices for the experience of reality.” (Ibid, p.129) The encounter between the spectator and the artwork is not “located fully inside the body, not fully outside it in the world, but at a living edge between haptic self and a heterogeneous and constantly changing universe.” (Ibid) She explains that Eliasson’s theoretical framework has been informed by phenomenological readings of reality. In particular, Husserl’s “now effect” and a sharing conviction with Merleau-Ponty that “human experience, including perception is embedded in a corporeal self.” (Ibid) Thus, his work is engaging the spectator’s physical presence which in turn activates the piece itself, or as the artist puts it: “my work is about positioning the subject.” (Birnbaum 2002)

Tiches discusses Eliasson’s breakout success with “*The Weather Project* [...] an astonishing installation in Tate Modern’s Turbine Hall in 2003.” (Ibid) This work consisted of the visual effect of a large circular disk that was alluding to the sun. A giant semi-circular form made of mono-frequency lights hung on the far wall emitting a misty orange light was reflecting in the mirror overhead producing the optical illusion of the sun. James Meyer describes that visitors were spread on the floor gazing upwards as if they were sunbathing under a massive industrial sun (Lee 2007). Lee states that Meyer criticises *The weather project* “dwarfing its viewers so that no active—that is critical—mode of spectatorship is possible.” (Ibid, p.40)

Lee mentions that immersive technologies stem from a “military-industrial impetus” which is pointing out the negative aspects that the enchanting power might have upon people. For her, “immersion’s not so subtle paradox is that the illusionistic worlds into which the user plunges are de-facto conjoined to the awkward



mechanisms that produce their perceptual effects.” (Ibid, p.45) However, Eliasson’s practice is not hiding the device behind immersion, instead he is deliberately showing that this is an artifice. Therefore, his work may open a field of discussion upon intermedia and their power. In comparison, *Sky-field* is a very small-scale performative installation that is not trying to create an imaginary world, neither manipulate the participants’ perception. In this respect, nothing is hidden but it is due to the careful design that takes into consideration the duration and the physicality of the experience that a shift into participants’ state is welcomed without overwhelming or forcing the perceiver.



**Fig. 83** Eliasson, O. (2003), *The Weather project* [installation art] London: Tate Modern Turbine Hall, photo credits by Andrew Dunkley & Marcus Leith

Situated between sculpture and installation, Robert Moriarty's practice is deeply rooted in concepts contextualized by landscape, such as beauty, transcendence and materiality. His theoretical background is informed by phenomenological thought and the question of raw materiality is central in his work. Moriarty is genuinely intrigued by materials of the everyday. In the piece *An all or nothing affair*, he is staging the primary relationship between the self and the world of matter.

In an interview given to the researcher (July 2018), Moriarty states that this work derived from his own experience of travelling by bus covering long distances throughout the island of Ireland. This meditative state of sensing himself blending with the (mostly) natural landscapes viewed from the bus's windows led to the creation of this piece. In *An all or nothing affair*, we witness the joyful play of appearance- disappearance among his body and his surroundings. The light effects and pace of changing images are shaping an almost transcendental experience of the viewer as the body of the performer blends with the ever-changing landscape.

Martin Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* is of great inspiration for Moriarty: "The term *Dasein* which was reinterpreted by Martin Heidegger, has profoundly influenced my work. I am currently redistributing objects into new configurations that attempt to open new possibilities to suggest alternative thinking about the interior." (Moriarty 2013, p.1) He considers his work as a de-materialization process of the visible and he is mainly concerned about the interior shifts occurring to the perceiver. Moriarty is "intrigued by the idea of re-evaluating materials that are fixed in the world, taking something from the fluctuating scape of life that we know as the present and then re-fixing it so that it can communicate in a different time and place." (Ibid) Hence, what we finally witness is an artwork emerging through "the shift in context. A change had certainly occurred, but not within the material of the object." This change for Moriarty

is “purely mental”: it is “the viewer’s consciousness of the object that had changed” (Ibid) and not the object itself.

This work is discussed in the current section mainly because it conveys in a quite clear way the sensation and experience sought by *Sky-field*. The experience that Moriarty is staging here is resonating to the sensation of losing my own body’s borders sensation because of the presence of the wind that has initially triggered the focus upon the *Butoh-body*. It is worth saying that similar bodily experiences might arrive to us unexpectedly during the course of our daily life under the form of insight but often go unnoticed. In *Sky-field*, the aim is to place attention to them and create a time-space coordinates of the situation that might allow them to emerge. Those coordinates are weaving the texture of participants’ body surroundings. In this sense, the others’ bodily presence is contributing to the building of this texture of which each one is indispensable part both in an interchange of offering and receiving. Hence, *Sky-field* marks an individual experience of the other-ness which is here seen as embracing any type of living landscape: human and non-human.



**Fig. 84 & 85** Moriarty, R. (2013) *An all or nothing affair* [video] Belfast

## 4.8 Conclusions

The research findings emerging by the participants' feedback evidence that *Sky-field 2* offered a robust and cohesive aesthetic experience which did not come across as fragmented engaging different layers of their attention (as had occurred previously in *Sky-field*). The brief introduction given by the researcher prior their entrance to the performative installation, explicitly encouraged an aesthetic modality of interaction within it. Moreover, the use of body-scan at the start had directed their attention to their inner body presence and this allowed them to reach a degree of immersion. All participants mentioned a sense of connection with the group, the space, the material and the video projection which established a shared dynamicity and fluidity within the experience. The research outcomes have been reached to a certain degree that is retained to be satisfactory; however, the research might benefit from a more careful consideration of the space and durational aspect of the work.

The room where *Sky-field 2* took place was a blacked-out space designed to host film projections. This factor was proved to be quite binding and did not allow participants to become fully free in their movements. The main reason is that the room is located within an institution (Ulster University) with specific rules, especially concerning keeping everything tidy and clean. The absence or loosening of rules in this respect is an important factor in order to release one's creative flow and reach immersivity which is a state of presence that should not cohere with a socially restricted code. An open-air space or an art lab would be more suitable for this type of performative installation experience because participants would not be filtering their movements in terms of tidiness. It is essential that similar practices are staged in a space without a carpeted floor (because the dusty material sticks to it).



Therefore, very conscious decision making with respect to the type of space that would host them should be applied.

The duration of *Sky-field 2* was decided merely in order to accommodate the feasibility for the participants to easily join it and fit it within their everyday routine schedules whereas the possibility of scheduling it as a durational event in a time zone or day out of the usual working hours of the week would give more time to the participants to develop different strands of experience. In a first instance, a larger time frame would restrict the amount of interest among participants but attract people that are consciously choosing to be part of it as this would be more demanding in terms of time and energy investment. However, this fact it would offer the opportunity to go deeper into this state of immersion as it is here perceived in conjunction with the notion of *Butoh-body*.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions of the research

In this chapter, initially I would like to give an overview of the different stages of the research to date, concentrating on my methodology, the research questions and my research design. Secondly, I will refer to the three major research projects and discuss my findings in order to reach to a number of conclusions. Finally, I will suggest possible future developments of the research that might lead to new insight in immersive performative installation practices.

#### 5.1 Research questions

In this section I will provide a brief overview of the process that led me to the formulation of the research questions of this project. The elaboration of the initial stimuli of perceiving my body within its surroundings endorsed by the sensation of the wind in togetherness with the practice-based research upon medium and materials brought me to consider the *Butoh-body* as the core of this research. *Butoh-body* notion opened an area of research that mainly focused to the modalities in which time and space are perceived in *Butoh* dance. This signified the pathway for deepening into Japanese phenomenological approaches on time-space as togetherness. In particular, a rich area of debate opened between primary sources that featured mainly Kitaro Nishida and western phenomenological theorists such as Merleau-Ponty and William James. As the theoretical research proceeded, in conjunction with the experimentation, concepts of liminality by Victor Turner fostered



a research in the area of drama theorists throughout history such as Suzuki, Zeami and Aristotle in what concerns the experience of transformation that the performer and audience would hopefully undergo in similar immersive practices. I would describe this research as profoundly interdisciplinary and aiming to bridge the traditionally-perceived tension between visual arts and drama-based practices focusing in immersivity. Therefore, my methodology has shaped an experiential, embodied and theory related research.

In particular, the following research questions have been observed to emerge: How does the *Butoh-body* notion enhance immersion in time-based art practices defined as performative installations? The sub-questions formed would concern specific use of mediums and participatory strategies deployed. Different areas were examined—such as individual versus group fruition, the duration of the experience, the compresence of audio input and its relationship with the performative event, the use of video projection within the installation setting, the type of suggested activity to be performed and managing control upon the group's dimension—in relation to the space where events took place with reference to the desired effect. Moreover, another research question concerned the modalities with which data gathering could occur in an efficient way given the elusive character of the researched area (immersion) and the ephemeral character of the research installations. I have been testing different ways of data collection including written questionnaires, filmed guided discussion and their combination. I will explain those different factors attaching them to the data emerged by three major projects in the next section entitled *Overview of the research design and Research findings*.

Reconnecting the research questions to their context, that is, the current landscape in arts, I would like to point out the importance of the current research. In doing so, I

am referring to what I perceived as gap in artistic research in order to shed light on the reason that motivated this inquiry. In this respect, it is crucial to highlight that this research is practice-based; my understanding has been shaped throughout a complex and active back-and-forth process of adjustments and readjustments of the adjustments which I could break down to the following points: a) my constantly evolving encounters with theoretical sources, b) bodily gained knowledge (during the attendance of *Butoh* seminars with Atsushi Takenouchi and Masaki Iwana) c) my professional practice that run in parallel under the form of 'off' projects to the current research d) disparate enriching discussions with practitioners and researchers. My experience of practice-based research was that of a multi-fold process that evolves throughout time and space.

One initial observation that triggered my curiosity to pursue this research has been the realization that however different installation artists are operating with the bodily presence of the viewer in their artwork, little attention is paid to the processual nature of the body perceived in its emotional and physical dimension. My interdisciplinary background as a visual artist with experience within corporeal and somatic practices—including physical theatre, drama and performative techniques—had opened an ever-growing sensitivity towards the body's agency and primacy that allowed me to sense this fact as a field that could be further developed or as a lack of efficacy. Within the current research I have been trying to point out the differentiation between a performative installation and installation art. My suggestion has been to pay attention to the duration of the experience as well as to the composition and formal elements of the work in a way that they consciously embrace the spectator. Questions as: 'From where does the stimuli arrive? Is it frontal or surrounds the spectator? How much does this experience last? Is it really the same

to have a quick view of the art piece or dwell into the artwork? How do I as an artist guide and take account of this parameter? In which way are the participant(s) invited to inhabit the space? Have constituted the backbone of this research project.

This particular desired state of presence in the space has been defined as immersion within the premises of my research. *Butoh-body* has informed the research design in so far as it offers the suitable and solid theoretical framework to locate the subtle state of immersion. I am therefore addressing the temporal and spatial dimension of an experience as significant and determinant for the quality of the experience itself. I am addressing the human beings in respect to their materiality and vulnerability to their context: Observing what occurs in nature, we find that the more a rag is left under the rain, the more it will be impregnated with water -thus its texture will be affected and subject to change.

The raw material for Butoh is the body as a living entity...A living entity consists of pure plasma energy, making it a substance that transcends society, the institution and even persons as existences confined within mutual and societal relationships. Whenever I ponder the body this way, I think of matter. Matter consists on component molecules which are linked closely or loosely, or regularly or irregularly...A human as a living entity different from a person is analogous to matter but its component molecules are far more diverse and colourful and it combines soul-emotions, will and intellect- with the physical body.

(Iwana 2011, p. 8)

In the above quote Iwana clearly describes an approach towards the body (which in this project would refer to the participants) as a material bound to be influenced by its surroundings (the research installation).

## 5.2 Overview of the research design: linkage of performative installations with the research questions

As already stated, the practice was addressing the question of how the *Butoh-body* notion may enhance immersion in performative installation practices. In doing so, I have been testing out different ways (mediums and modalities) of adjusting the theoretical and experiential anchorage in order to shape my artistic practice attempting to answer to this question. The research has been articulated through three major performative installation iterations as follows:

- a) *Seabed* (March 2018) was addressing the primal stages of creativity in the *Butoh-body* through stillness. This phase would correspond to the preparatory stage of the performer before stepping into the dance. In *Seabed's* research design I have been working with individual fruition in the space and with the compresence of the audio that was marking the duration of the experience itself. Therefore, the experience of the participant was subordinated to an external factor which was music (15min). Moreover, I have been experimenting with the creation of an embracing effect: the components of the installation were situated in an engulfing way whereas the body of the participant was central. The suggested posture, (an element that has been crucial in all performative installations) was that of lying down on one's back preferably with bent knees. This posture might be compared to the embryo's position inside the maternal liquid, somewhat resonating with a pre-natal state of presence.

- b) *Waste-is-land* (April 2018) has been a small group experiential based performative installation. This time, I was experimenting with introducing action drawing the parallels with the external activation of the *Butoh* performers after an initial stage of grounding their presence (*Seabed*). Attention was paid to the posture that comprised moving upwards and downwards in between the crouching and full extension position. This mobility in the participants' posture was achieved by designing with precision the task that they were assigned to: they were asked to handle raw material (ground level) and display it to the space (ground, middle and upper levels) paying attention to the aesthetic outcome of their decision making. Visual documentation of the created space was collected after each iteration (9 in total). Sound was running in parallel to their experience but not determining its duration. Instead, duration varied based to each group consistency and oscillated between 20- and 45-min. Accidental audience might occur because of unpredictable flow of passer-by therefore there was constantly a sensation of being observed.
- c) *Sky-field 1* (September 2018) was a broad group action with the compresence of video projection. In this case, I have placed no specific boundaries and rules to the number of participants. As a result, they would alternate themselves with being (passive) witnesses as well as (active) participants. The suggested action was goal-oriented and required a great amount of concentration. The posture kept was mainly crouching and staying close to the ground. The audio was marking the duration of the experience (1 hour). The video projection was positioned in the space as an interdependent entity

alluding to a loose connection with the action. Video coverage was going on during the experience.

- d) *Sky-field 2* (February 2019) has been the second version of *Sky-field 1* encompassing its components (except from the clothesline web) in a different set up in the space. This time, the video projection was incorporated to the performative installation and its physicality was amalgamated with the action of the participants. The group was fixed (9 participants): this choice reflected the dimensions of the space. The audio run only initially before the action would start taking off and then seized to be, therefore the participants' experience has been the decisive factor of the duration of the piece. A clear preparatory stage (body-scan) that envisioned a guided meditation was introduced prior to the action itself. Final duration of the event was approximately that of an hour including body-scan practice (30 min) and participants' action (25- 30 min). The experience has been documented under the form of a photographic archive.

In addition, another strand of the research questions concerned in which way I shall address audience's feedback in an efficient way in so far as the experience analysed was not quantifiable as such. This created the necessity to test out different ways of gathering and assessing participants' data and unfolded as a parallel research: when the previous sub-question was dealing with the content and nature of the experience this one was dealing with the transferability of it. During the research I have been using respectively the following methods in order to gather data:

a) *Seabed*: qualitative research method that included written feedback, informal discussion after the experience and qualitative analysis. No visual documentation was kept.

b) *Waste-is-land*: qualitative research method involving written feedback, informal exchange after the experience and qualitative analysis. Photographic documentation of the creative outcomes for each group

c) *Sky-field 1*: qualitative research method comprising a guided filmed discussion after the experience. The event was filmed throughout.

d) *Sky-field 2*: qualitative research method consisting of written feedback and guided filmed discussion after the experience. The event has been photographed.

### 5.3 Research findings and their evaluation

**Table 1:** Table with comparisons from participants' feedback (% of engagement)

Themes	Seabed	Waste-is-land	Sky-field 1	Sky-field 2
Calm, relaxed	70%	85%	-	100%
Immersed, meditative	25%	28%	100%	-
Tense, uneasy	25%	-	25%	-
Playful, childhood	28%	40%	25%	30%
Slow-down	30%	55%	-	50%
Acceleration	20%	-	-	30%
Collaborative			-	60%

It is important to highlight that this the research adopts a qualitative analysis as more appropriate method in order to discuss subtleties and changes of mood in participants' reaction. The table is here provided in order to offer a quicker overview of the situation but it does not constitute an accurate and sufficient way of data discussion because a. the questionnaires (available in the appendix) offered open-ended questions which allowed the

participant to use their own choice of vocabulary in order to describe their experience. This choice was made in order to safeguard a non-leading approach in the data gathering. Hence, what is recorded in the above table is only the repetition of keywords without illustrating other nuances or the specific context with which those keywords have been used.

b. participants' use of specific terminology such as 'immersed' in order to refer to their state of presence does not overlap with the way in which immersion has been extensively defined within current research. In particular, in *Sky-field 1* where we note that 100% of participants described their experience as such, in fact this state could be better described as 'dissociative immersion.' (See p.270) In order to gain a deeper insight a careful reading of their responses attached in the questionnaire section is suggested. Readers are encouraged to go through the following section where above data are thoroughly discussed and combine them with Questionnaires found in appendix.

With regards to the aim of the current research that concerns the immersivity effect upon the participants' experience, once the gathered data have been teased out, I arrived at the following conclusions.

#### a) Stillness vs. Action: modalities of perception

In *Seabed*, the majority of the participants reported that they have sensed a deep relaxation (Participant 3: "the effect was softening", Participant 7: "I found the piece very relaxing and soothing") whereas only a small number referred to this experience as being unfamiliar and upsetting (Participant 14: "It had a familiar and unfamiliar feeling at the same time"). However, since the set-up of the performative installation did not allow for the participants to reach out of the fixed boundaries of the metallic structure only a limited amount of movement did occur. This fact, in comparison to *Waste-is-land* and *Sky-field 2*, where people had to engage with a task that led them



to move throughout the space, endorsed a sensation of withdrawal to the participants' experience. Almost all participants mentioned that they recalled past memories of them, especially related to their childhood (Participant 1: "it brought back memories of childhood, playing on the beach, getting lost in the woods", Participant 23: "maybe a reminder of sleeping in a strange bed as a child"). Therefore, this state could be best compared to what Leder refers to as "the absent body" regaining its awareness. This means that whereas according to Leder "one's body is rarely the thematic object of the experience" (Leder 1990, p.1) in *Seabed*, participants are reporting a series of sensations (Participant 14: "I felt muscle tensions relax") that prove a shift in their attention focus and body awareness.

The *Seabed* effect would coincide to what Zarrilli names as "the recessive body." (Zarrilli 2004, p. 657) The latter, is characterized by a "visceral stance to the world", it tends to move "inwards" and to "recede" and its mode of perception would be defined as "interoception." (Ibid) However, in the rest of iterations (of which I exclude *Sky-field 1* because the nature of the task has been unfortunate) we observe what Zarrilli would define as the "aesthetic inner body-mind." (Ibid) The reason is that, in those group iterations, the action and the compresence of the other participants forced the audience to become aware both of their inner and outer presence: Being asked to carry out an action in togetherness that brought them to move across the space, participants activated their peripheral vision and body awareness simultaneously. Moreover, the fact that they were either observed by an accidental audience or photographed, activated their sense of being seen, therefore they became performative in the same way that a *Butoh* dancer would be aware of the impact of their movements in the space. As Zarrilli remarks, the "aesthetic inner body-mind" has a "subtle stance in relation to the world." (Ibid)

This type of embodied presence, “once awakened: inward/ outward as a dialectic” means that the participant/ performer constantly oscillates between two different states of being recessive and “ecstatic.” (Ibid) Zarrilli’s term “ecstatic” corresponds to the surface sensorimotor stance located in the flesh or skin. Else, the “ecstatic” stance would be our ordinary state of being that Leder (1990) names as the “absent body” as far as we are mainly accessing the external stimuli that arrive to us. Finally, we may conclude that whenever action in this particular setting was involved, participants addressed multiple modes of perception including “attentiveness to exteroception, proprioception and interoception.” (Ibid) This is notable here (*Seabed* Participant 2: “there was a sense of subliminal containment”, Participant 11 “the overall effect was therapeutic, healing, return to inner body;”) in comparison with (*Waste-is-land* Participant group 2: “Very much to the sensate body-tactile journey, the heat of the earth, the feel of the different cloth on my forearms”, Participant group 6: “I felt both connected and also outside and felt throughout the fluctuation between the two”; *Sky-field 2* Participant 8: “Peaceful- not really aware of my mood as my body was in autofocus”, Participant 3: “I enjoyed interacting with others it made me more aware of what was happening”).

The “aesthetic inner-body-mind” (Ibid) would resonate with Iwana’s “nikutai”: “the body as a living and changing sculpture fashioned by life itself.” (Iwana 1995) Iwana explains that *Butoh* dancers have always referred to the body

...with that immanent 'original landscape' ('dance') as 'nikutai', to be distinguished from the physical body, or flesh, as a biological entity. To realize 'nikutai', a *butoh* dancer must recognize and amass personal experiences, memories and bodily

habits; and since butoh [sic] is an art of expression, he must also have the ability to 'montage' those personal elements. (Iwana, 1989)

Whereas it is fundamental that participants recede to the state of recalling their memories and recognize their bodily sensations as in Zarrilli's "recessive body" (Zarrilli 2004, p. 657), this does not mark a withdrawal state; another step is needed in order to reach "nikutai" (Iwana, 1995) which requires a proactive stance into the space (here, performative installation) Hence, "nikutai" constitutes an embodied response that might take the form of an action or movement either visible or invisible. Similarly, for Zarrilli, the "aesthetic inner body-mind" establishes a dialectic relationship between states of presence. It is concluded that the state of immersion—as a double folded presence in and out— has been achieved in an extended degree in *Waste-is-land* and *Sky-field 2* for the majority of the participants whereas in *Seabed* and *Sky-field 1* this occurred less and mainly by participants that had already a history in psychophysical training experience.

#### b) Goal- oriented vs. Open-ended task: enabling creativity

Both *Waste-is-land* and *Sky-field 2* comprised an open-ended group task whereas *Sky-field 1* presupposed a goal-oriented action. In the latter case, the participants, did not move across the space and had limited interaction among each other (*Sky-field 1* Participant 4: "it was like a mechanical continuum. Then whenever I started taking part, I had the sense of being overwhelmed of all this amount of rice and flour to be divided", Participant 14: "I think that if we did not have too much stimuli, we would be more collaborative"). Moreover, the posture was quite demanding for a

person without physical training, thereafter, a subtle annoyance (mild pain) was reported (*Sky-field 1* Participant 1: “I wanted to do my best for me (laughs). That is funny because I have ended only feeling sore in my legs”) as a factor that disrupted persons from being immersed to the performative installation. According to Zarrilli, “the normative disappearance of both surface and recessive bodies is reversed when we experience pain or dysfunction. In pain, sensory intensification in the body demands direct thematization. Pain is an affective call [...]” (Zarrilli 2004, p. 660). Therefore, this slight discomfort caused from the posture that participants were invited to assume in *Sky-field 1*, contributed to their being recessive rather than have a balance between “recessive” and “ecstatic” bodies (Zarrilli 2004, p. 657) which has been previously argued as resonating with “nikutai” encountered in the *Butoh-body* notion (Iwana, 1995). On the contrary, in *Waste-is-land* and *Sky-field 2*, the posture was alternating between crouching (when participants were either gathering or disposing the material) and standing (in order to transfer the material in the space, they had to move among different points and levels in the room). This factor, added comfort in their movement and requested a more complex body coordination in order to handle the material and to share the space effectively among each other. (*Sky-field 2* Participant 4: “My experience was more collective than individual”, Participant 6: “I was very aware of others but in a lovely way. I was mesmerised by watching the light dance of their hands and fall down with the rice”).

In addition, in *Sky-field 1* the nature of the task, has prevented participants’ engagement with the space and peripheral vision as soon as it requested a great amount of concentration and had a specific and measurable outcome (dividing an important amount of rice from wheat flour). The nature of the task enhanced individual behaviour rather than acting as a whole towards a non-functional target as

happened in *Waste-is-land* and *Sky-field 2* where participants' attention was deliberately drawn towards the aesthetic outcome. By inviting explicitly, the aesthetic quality of their response, participants felt more legitimated to act freely since in such context no clear boundaries between wrong or right, efficiency and failure exist. In the case of an open-ended task almost all participants reported a sensation of being amalgamated with the group in a fluid way and a sense of freedom and playfulness (*Sky-field 2* Group 1 Participant 7: "It reminded me of playing with sand at play-school. Freeing and fun, communication through movement not language", *Waste-is-land* Group 5: "Having others in the space only served to bring me out of the trance-like state I was in, in the beginning. However, as the artwork went on, being aware of the others/ they became part of the trance"). Creativity entails a degree of transgression which was here achieved successfully by choosing an open-ended task that allowed participants to reinvent their way of interpreting the rules.

### c) Live experience vs. Mixed media event: the fragility of immersion

I find important to connect the different performative installations in order to shed light to the fact that this research is intrinsically interdependent. In my exploration of immersion, the fragility and subtlety of this state became more obvious whenever I decided to test out things. The realisation that there exist different degrees of immersion and that it is about a gradual and processual phenomenon that I have been exploring became palpable as I reached awareness of the difference in the feedback collected from all those disparate research installations. I will link them in pairs and go through a comparison in order to offer a deeper insight of my findings.

*Seabed* acted as a pool or preparatory stage that allowed participants to come closer to their inner body sensations, an important stage before stepping into any type of performative experience. Its research design included a relative stillness, absence of being observed and lack of any request to take action in the space which allowed them to be more receptive. Elements of it have been deployed later on at the research design of *Sky-field 2* where body-scan experience was introduced as a preparatory stage before stepping into the action itself. The posture was quite similar, in this case instead of lying down with knees bent, participants would be either sitting in a cross-legged position or lay down. The participants were asked to close their eyes during this guided meditation, so in a way, their visual stimulation from outside would be reduced. Finally, during body-scan, participants would just follow the guidance of the recorded voice being asked to take their attention inwards. Majority of participants referred to the body-scan as a helpful stage (*Sky-field 2*, Group 2 Participant 3: “It removed me from the time prior to entering the space”, Participant 8: “overall it was a beautiful approach to relaxing and becoming aware in the present moment”) that encouraged them to be more grounded in their body before acting as a group.

There are evidences for my thesis to constitute a successful marriage between the backgrounds of visual art and drama practice. On the contrary, in *Sky-field 1*, people were not given any chance to release tension from everydayness before stepping into the experience. However, I am not arguing here that it is necessary to include a recollection moment before any performative installation in such a clear-cut way as with *Sky-field 2*. What I am pointing out, is the importance of cultivating this presence and offering space and time to the audience in order to reach immersion. This point is of outmost importance for the research design of an immersive performative

installation and creative solutions could be found each time in relation to the context of the event.

Immersion calls for a combination of factors that should in a way feed each other in an organic way. This requires a very careful and sensitive process of creation. For example, in *Waste-is-land* there has been no preparatory stage but participants were working in small groups (3-5 persons) and they were given a brief introduction by the researcher with very explicit tasks that included the suggestion to “act as a group.” Whereas in *Sky-field 1*, different elements, (except from the lack of a preparatory stage) have been acting as disruptive factors for the immersivity effect:

- the number of the participants was unstable and difficult to predict and control. This created an atmosphere of instability among participants as different energetic and attention states were intermingled. Moreover, this contributed to the difficulty to move freely in the space as the number of participants was exceeding the capacity of the space in a way that would assure fluidity of movement.

- the set-up of the components of the performative installation in *Sky-field 1* created a sense of disorientation that required much time before things and associations settled down. In particular, the video projection acted as a competitive force in relation to the experience unfolding in the centre of the space. On the contrary, in *Sky-field 2*, a physical and conceptual relation between the video projection and the action has been established in a smoother way (*Sky-field 2* Group 2, Participant 7: “I liked the playfulness with the shadow and the light while playing with the rice and flour under the projector.”) This allows me to assume that immersion is a fine state that can be easily threatened by the presence of massive or chaotic media environments.

-the participants were divided between contemplation and withdrawal. Contemplative mood is here understood as resonating with Zarrilli's "ecstatic body" (Zarrilli 2004, p. 657) whereby the attention is placed outside of us, thus our body becomes "absent" (Leder, 1990). Withdrawal state in this case could only partially be associated with *Seabed* preparatory stage of reconnecting with one's body since participants' attention was given to details and efficacy and this did not allow them to access "nikutai" (Iwana 1995). I would therefore characterize *Sky-field 1* as a dissociative immersive experience.

- Freedom concerning the duration of the experience has to be preserved in a careful way. The presence of audio or video input might result as risking to subordinate the experience to the set-up. *Seabed* was marked by the duration of the audio. *Seabed* participants often mentioned they would have stayed longer in the performative installation (*Seabed* Participant 6: "I was not aware of time passing. It was as if I was in a time bubble- being in the present only. A sense of slowing time. I could focus or pick out different tones of sound allowing me to be in the moment only. I was in no hurry to leave"). *Waste-is-land* and *Sky-field 2* both saw the audio as an accompaniment adding to the atmosphere more than to the action itself. In *Waste-is-land*, the audio was structured as a playful improvisation with voice and pause and the audio in *Sky-field 2*, was only accompanying participants during first 5 min. On the contrary, participants of *Sky-field 1* (where the experience was marked by the duration of media) mentioned the audio as being very immersive but somehow preponderant (*Sky-field 1* Participant 2: "But then what was the dominance of the video and the sound had a very hypnotic effect. So, I was getting drawn away", Participant 14: "I was interested in your attempt to take the audio and video to cohere, I saw coherence but also



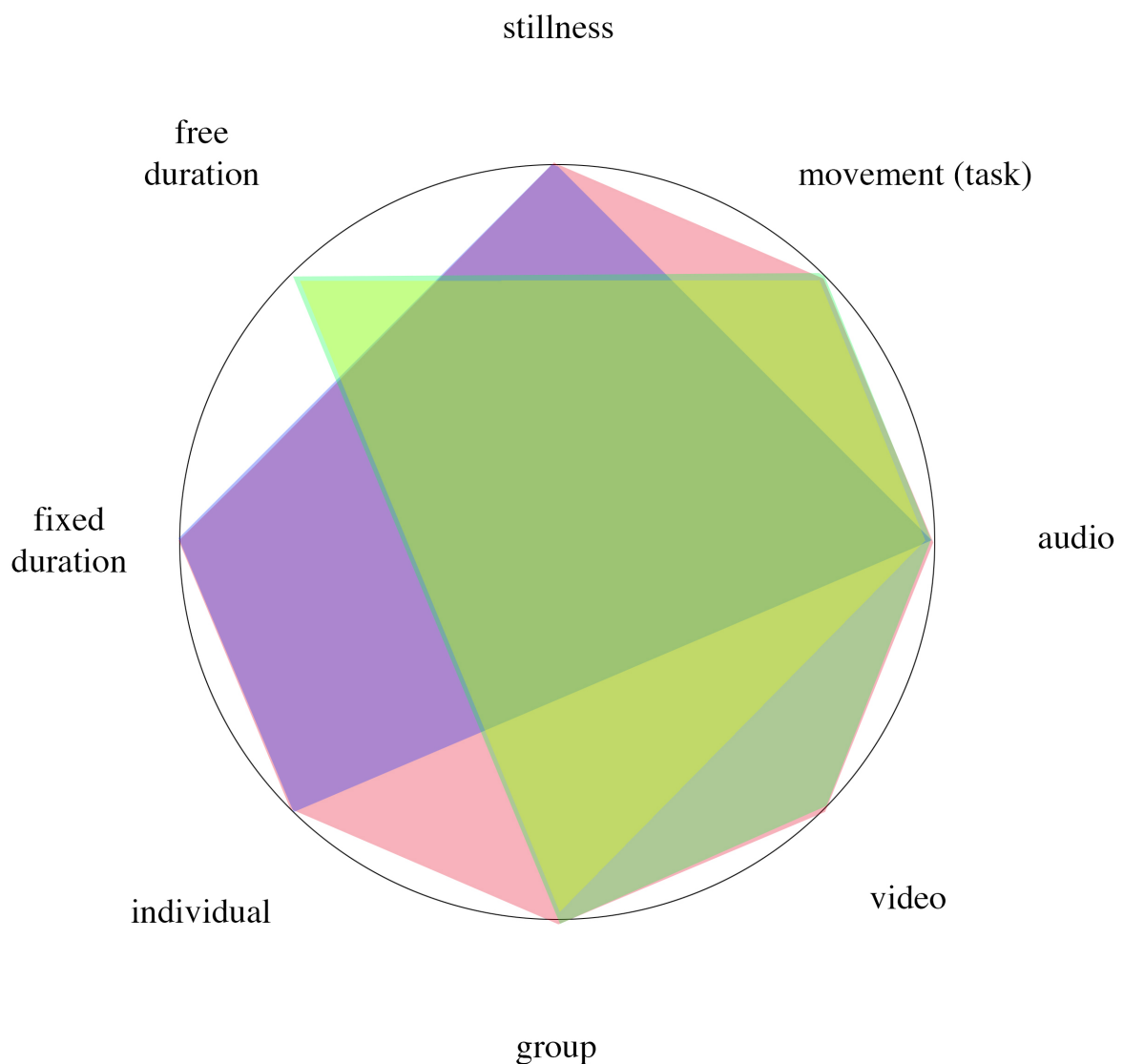
dissonance. In the sound there were disjunctive moments. Maybe this could be smoothed out.”)

d) Written questionnaire vs. guided group discussion: grasping elusive data

Throughout the three major research installations I have been engaging different methods of data gathering testing them for their suitability to produce accurate findings. In *Seabed*, where the experience was individual, the method deployed was a written questionnaire plus an informal conversation 1:1 after the experience. The verbal exchange was useful in order to give me an idea of how the participant overall responded to the performative installation but also in order to amend mainly technical and practical issues. In *Waste-is-land*, a written questionnaire and an informal (group) dialogue occurred after the event too. Since *Waste-is-land* was a group experience it has been observed that often some participants among the group would actually engage more with the discussion—in relation to the data they supplied in the written questionnaire—by adding or commenting on previous thoughts expressed. Hence, I was able to reach a deeper understanding of the overall impression of the group and its dynamics when engaging with participants in an inclusive way of conversing. For this reason, I have opted for the introduction of a guided filmed discussion after *Sky-field 1* instead of the written questionnaires. Filming the discussion has been useful because it allowed me to go through it several times and observe different aspects of it -such as body and facial expressions of the participants: the video of the discussion added more data to the content of participants’ answers to further analyse and this factor enhanced my own understanding. Moreover, the informal mood of the discussion stimulated

participants' sense of freedom to express themselves in a less prescribed way and add aspects of the experience that were not asked in the questionnaire. The guided discussion was helpful in order to reach conclusions about the event itself through the lens of their individual experiences. However, it has been observed that some participants would be more outward during the discussion when others were more introverted. My aim was to assure that participants were given the same possibility to express their points of view. For this reason, in *Sky-field 2*, both methods (written questionnaire and guided group discussion) have been used in order to assure a deeper understanding of the event. As a conclusion, it could be argued here that the two research methods of data gathering that have been deployed covered distinct strands of the experience. Therefore, their combination could be evaluated as more effective.

I am using the visual diagram methods for user engagement (Curedale, 2016) in order to offer an overview of the mediums and audience strategies deployed in each of 4 performative installations. The diagram illustrates how mediums have often overlapped with each other in a process of refinement aiming to meet the immersive effect upon participants. I have used different colors for each performative installation as follows: a. *Seabed* b. *Waste-is-land* c. *Sky-field 1* and d. *Sky-field 2*.



**Figure 86** Visual diagram of audience and medium strategies for immersive performance installation

### 5.3 Beyond the scope of the research; what to do next

This research has been a multi-layered and interdisciplinary experimentation of the *Butoh-body* notion's potentiality to enhance immersion in performative installation practices. It mainly addresses the creation process and opens up a map or trajectory of how to effectively deal with the research design of similar practices. In doing so, it takes us to a journey unfolding by the setting in dialogue among each other relevant theoretical sources. This fact offers a pool of reflection that might be valuable to conceptual pursuits of this nature.

It would be beneficial for this practice-based inquiry training in its potential further exploration to consider an extension of the duration of the experience and its placement in a non-institutional site. The combination of the above in the current project acted as a limitation force in so far as the participants were not given the option of a flexibly durational experience and the space itself did not allow them to be transgressive in a way that would have additionally fed into the creative aspects of the *Butoh-body*. Moreover, the research project could also seek for major clarity in its data gathering if a refinement upon participants is done. For example, participants could be divided in base of their background or not in the arts and in base of their physical training history. This might allow to have a more precise and personalized image of the modalities in which they tend to respond to the research design.

This research contains insight into perception of time and space in relation to bodily involvement of participants. The findings would find applications in different areas: apart from the creative arts, further applications would eventually be within arts therapy and community arts sectors as well as in curatorial practices. The delicate

and intimate timbre of the researched subject as well as the psychophysical nature of the engagement involved might be suitable as an expressive stimulation for people in healing processes from a mental/ physical issue either suffering trauma in post-conflict areas such Northern Ireland in particular. The project findings would be proven very useful in the design of multi-sensory activities addressing issues with mental health. The overall approach within this project goes beyond cultural, social or religious boundaries addressing the participants' primal bodily presence as such. Therefore, this could be a potentially suitable and enriching modality to foster interactivity within a Community arts scheme favouring inclusivity, intergenerational approaches, non-ethnic or religious division policies hence against sectarianism. Moreover, this interdisciplinary project provided an alternative way of addressing space and non-conventional way of developing participatory techniques allowing intersubjectivity to flourish. The research findings would be an interesting element to take into consideration when curating a contemporary art event out of the conventional gallery space borders but also in the architectural choices of a social/ working space in a way that they do not result in alienation or stress disorders.

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## **A Appendices**

**A 1 Data Transcription questionnaire Seabed**

**A 2 Data Transcription Questionnaire Waste-is-land**

**A 3 Sky-field-1 Data Transcription of the guided discussion**

**A 4 Data transcription written feedback *Sky-field 2***

## A 1 Data Transcription questionnaire Seabed

-What was the effect of the installation/artwork space on your mood during the course of your experience of the installation? (Was this effect consistent or did your mood change during your exposure to the piece?)

Total number of participants (24)

Recurring themes:

relaxed, calm, soothing: 17 participants: 70%  
tense, uneasy, threatening: 6 participants: 25%  
enclosed, immersed, wrapped: 2 participants: 6%  
aware, focused: 3 participants: 12%

1. I had **relaxation** at first, then got tense and relaxed again in the end.
2. I was feeling being overwhelmed in an unknown, gloomy atmosphere, like a cave in a dark jungle, feeling cold and not knowing where to find refuge.
3. The effect was '**softening**'...and the sound of the bells seemed to register with the upper part of the body...and a more muffled "windy" sound seemed to locate with the lower/ central part of the body.
4. In the beginning, I felt **relaxed** but as the audio became louder and more **intense**, I felt something was going to happen-bells ringing etc. The water flowing sounds and air blowing (fan) were constant throughout.
5. I found the installation **relaxed** me. Initially I had lots of thoughts processing the experience but gradually I drifted into a sort of semi-conscious state. As the sounds became more frenetic and the piece progressed, I felt an element of ... but then this...
6. I felt **relaxed** at the start of the installation because the music was mellow. However, the longer I lay there the more time I had to think about my surroundings + I started to analyse my experience. This along with the rapid change in audio, changed my mood.
7. I found the piece very **relaxing** and **soothing**. At first, I was very aware of the air blowing against my skin, and the sounds and the sky/sea above me. Over time, I found that I closed my eyes and was very **focused** on the sound. My mood shifted during this time and I was allowing different thoughts to drift through my head. However, I felt peaceful and relaxed throughout. The artwork helped my mood because I was stressed before I arrived.
8. During my exposure, my mood was **calm** and **relaxed**. The mixture of sounds was interesting-natural and human made, sonorous and sharp. Mood mostly calm although was **aware** of a change as the intensity of the sounds grew.
9. I found the installation experience very **soothing** at the beginning. I particularly liked the sound of bells and water. The sounds of what to me were like ships engine (perhaps I was influenced by the title "seabed") gave a feeling of melancholy as if I was a dead body which has been...at sea.

10. I arrived rushed and slightly stressed: the experience certainly felt like a "time out"- I didn't feel relaxed after it but I did feel like I had stepped out of the daily grind into another space.
11. Soft, suspended black fabric I was lying on felt so secure-reminds me of my hammock, also made me feel like I was floating (I love the sea) so floating is always good. Blue gives my body the feeling of sunny days.
12. Mood- **mild panic** at first, claustrophobia, sick stomach. Lasted only a few minutes, then orientation took place and I enjoyed the remaining time as a meditation in 'savassana', the "corpse pose".
13. The installation had a **calmly** effect on my mood. At times, my mind drifted off but shifts in the audio context caught my attention and I began to feel more in the present.
14. It took me sometime to settle. After a while I did feel **immersed** in the environment. It had a familiar and an unfamiliar feeling at the same time. I **relaxed**. I felt sleepy. Then I started feeling cold. I had the feeling something was going to happen because of the constant building up of the sound. Then I felt like I was **wrapped** into a vessel and the vessel was moving towards a direction. Sometimes I felt **uneasy** but then I would relax again. There was a ritualistic/ paganist feeling.
15. It **relaxed** me. The fact of being lying on the ground helped, plus the soft material and the blue light.
16. Mood flows with audio, but visually it tries to hold my mood static. But audio and visual become holistic when the lower and deeper humming sound comes in.
17. Starting with **calm** mood and following the escalation of the music temp the mood is escalating to more **tense** feeling, like the need to stand, explore room and change positions.
18. I felt very **enclosed**, felt like in a den and at times wanted to go to sleep. The sound (although coming from one point hasn't been all around me) created a certain mood which is hard to describe, it wasn't calm, was changing.
19. I felt that the experience evoked several moods throughout transitioning from one apprehension and uncertainty at the beginning through to a deep **relaxed** mood when the tonal bells/chimes and running water played and then **unease** and awareness with the more atonal sounds. Finally, stillness.
20. At times, I felt as if I was falling asleep and then I would be awakened by louder aspects of the soundscape.
21. I was quite **relaxed**. The music was interesting. I **focused** most when the music stopped and I listened to the flapping paper, became more aware of the breeze and caught the sound of distant violin playing. I had noticed a louder tone of the music at one stage and wondered if it was intentionally a little **threatening**.
22. I became more **relaxed** as I listened to the installation. My mood did not change.
23. **Calming** and **relaxing**.
24. My mood did not change much. Lying on my back became slightly uncomfortable toward the end but that was due to a shoulder and back issue.

-What was the effect of the artwork on your body? Could you describe any sensations and how you perceived your body during and after exposure to the artwork?

Recurring themes:

immersive, connection, floating: 6 participants: 25%

meditative, reflective: 3 participants: 12%

cold, un-centered: 3 participants: 12%

relaxed, comfortable: 6 participants: 25%

1. I felt a **connection** with earth my back in the nature. The wind coming near my head gave me the feeling of my body laying outside in a rainy forest. I changed my position and rolled to my right. This time wind came from my back, I felt it passing through my body.
2. There was a sense of subliminal **containment**. Initially, there was a cool windiness on the left side of the head and a sense of intense blue, straight ahead centre left. Shed an overall sense of easing up, towards melting.
3. Sometimes I felt my body was **floating** with the effect of the audio and space.
4. I felt a very languid physicality, **comfortable** but slightly **cold** (from the fan). I also felt that my relaxed state was best facilitated with half-shut eyes.
5. I felt **comfortable** enough to lie for 15 minutes, the ground was awkward and uncomfortable and the speaker to the right of me was overpowering in my right ear, it was however durable.
6. I felt the air blowing on my skin, which (together with the sound and the blue) recalled being at the beach. I had the sensations of being by the sea. Physically, I was also conscious of relaxing. It was almost **meditative**.
7. Effect on my body? I became introspective, thoughtful. At one point was aware of a growing sense of menace-as the sound deepened. The overall feelings and sensation were of calm and being **reflective**.
8. My aunt had first died the day before, so this made me think of her and her long life and peaceful passing.
9. It reminded me how tired I feel right now- I yawned a lot! It did take my mind off all the elements I had arrived with- because I was focussing on the moment- which was good. However, I felt I couldn't really get comfortable- the cold air from the fan really bothered me and the sound coming from one side made me feel **unbalanced**.
10. Soft, suspended black fabric I was lying on felt so secure. Reminds me of my hammock, also made me feel like I was **floating** (I love the sea) so floating is always good. Blue gives my body the feeling of sunny days.
11. The overall effect was therapeutic, **healing**, return to the inner body. The time passed quickly and seemed all too short.
12. I was uncomfortable at first but changed my position after a couple of minutes so that my head/ feet were in line with the door. I enjoyed the experience of the vibrations of the fan upon the cloth complemented with the audio track- the two seemed to connect.
13. I felt relaxed and **comfortable**. Then I felt cold. I hallucinated a bit.
14. I felt muscle tensions relax and I enjoyed very much the contact with the soft, stretchy material. The experience was **immersive** and invited slow, relaxed (and limited) body movements. Some of the louder sounds created a contrast from the above, bringing back consciousness to the hard floor and the breeze.

15. I immediately imagined myself under water, the light became brighter and really bright with the contrast of solid black patches once the iris got used to the environment.
16. I laid down, then I think in the middle of the exposure I considered sit and further more getting my head out of the top roof of the installation.
17. My head was cold. At some point, it nearly went dark in my eyes.
18. It moved from normal to relaxed, unease and then stillness and calm as the experience progressed.
19. I felt **relaxed** throughout, I kept feeling slightly numb all over then regaining consciousness in parts of my body. Sometimes I felt like I was leaning to the side, but I wasn't, and I felt I couldn't re-centre myself.
20. I was doing pelvic floor exercises most of the time, so my body awareness related to this at first, I was a little uncomfortable and restless and then settled to the exercises. When the music stopped, I lay calmly and enjoyed the breeze.
21. My muscles became more and more **relaxed** as the piece progressed and are still very relaxed after. As the sounds got louder, I felt a tingling sensation in my muscles almost similar to "pins and needles".
22. Just felt **relaxed** and peaceful

-Was there any change in your awareness of time's passing whilst within the installation? (Did you sense any slowing or acceleration of your perception of time in comparison with ordinary everyday experience?)

Visitors' reply

Reccurent themes:

Slow-down: 8 participants: 30%

Suspension, lack of awareness: 5 participants: 20%

Nervous: 1 participant: 4%

Acceleration, fastness: 5 participants: 20%

1. The specifics of time experience seemed to melt...there was a period towards the end in which I didn't distinguish between time/space/place...
2. It felt like time had slowed down-there was a feeling of acceleration when the audio became more intense.
3. It seemed that the installation passed quickly. Initially, it seemed like a **slowed-down** time compared to ordinary time, but the 15 minutes passed really quickly.
4. I didn't feel like I was there as long as I was, even thinking back now I can't remember what I could have possibly thought about over 15 minutes. When the sound got louder, I started thinking about the time, this was due to my physical comfort though.
5. My awareness of time changed. Time was almost **suspended**- I had no idea how long I was in the installation. Probably, I would say time **slowed** because I felt relaxed and I was just drifting.
6. I was not aware of time passing. It was as if I was in a time bubble - being in the present only. A sense of **slowing** of time. I could focus or pick out different tones of sound allowing me to be in the moment only. I was in no hurry to leave.
7. I did not think of time at all, the installation made me feel **suspended** in timelessness.

8. I didn't feel relaxed into it or surrender to the passing of time; I found myself counting in between the blasts of cold air and try to avoid them.
9. **Slowing** to begin with- then time passed very quickly, it felt less than 15 minutes.
10. The time passed quickly and seemed all too short.
11. Not so much- if anything I felt that I was in the installation for only a short time, it felt shorter than 20 minutes. I'd say I felt the passing of time to be **accelerated** to the rest of the day.
12. I think that I was there longer than I actually was. Time **stretched**.
13. Time did take on a slightly different pace than everyday life. In general, I would say it went **faster** (in the sense that the whole experience had the feeling of being over quickly, despite the dilated and non-conventional pace that you could experience inside) maybe except for when the sound was louder.
14. Similar to ordinary.
15. Probably some sense of time **slowing** at the beginning of the experience.
16. Time was long and short.
17. The more meditative phase of the music with water and chimes (5/6 mins?) **slowed** time and enhanced presence in a calming way.
18. I thought it went by quite quickly, I didn't really focus on time passing.
19. The time passed quickly after my initial restlessness.
20. At times I forgot where I was and time seemed to **slow down**.
21. Not really.

-Did your presence within the artwork evoke connections with any particular personal experiences (of particular environments and places)? If yes, which? Please feel free to describe them without a requirement to mention place-names or the names of people or any other identifying details.

Visitors reply

Recurrent themes:

beach, sea, forest: 14 participants: 60%

womb-like, den: 5 participants: 20%

childhood: 7 participants: 28%

uneasiness: 3 participants: 12%

1. It brought back memories from **childhood**, playing on the **beach**, getting lost in the woods. I thought about my childhood friends; where they may be now. I felt freedom my body free to wander around the **forest**.
2. The last music evoked me to escape and to move and not stay static while I could see images of falling icebergs on me. It was freezing.
3. There was an inference of "**womb-like**" experience, of non-attachment to specifics...of being immersed in "embrace" beyond fixity.
4. It remembered me of swimming in the sea and looking up at the sky from under the water. Also experience of walking in a **forest**.
5. Initially I felt on through I were in a very wet **forest** and had memories of many walks in damp Irish forests. As this progressed, I felt more underwater and had quite pleasant thought of drowning, perhaps in a beautiful warm tropical sea.
6. Yes, I thought of my experience as **child** when I first went to the pool and my brother dropped me underwater and I thought I was drowning. I also thought

of a hospital bed with the ceiling lit the way it was. Overall an interesting experimental piece with some nice elements and multi-sensory.

7. I found myself thinking both of: happy times at the **beach**, or by the sea, in different countries and at different times in my life. Also: everyday stresses, but I didn't feel tense-just allowed the ideas and thoughts to pass through my head.
8. It remembered me of a time when I was in Donegal as a student –in a **field** listening to the world around me. It also brought me back to a moment on Fair Head in the middle of a thunderstorm. It was a mixture of calm and exhilaration. Good memories.
9. Upon entering I thought that this would be comfortable and relaxing- like getting set up for a massage! This was not really my experience-to be honest it reminded me more of having an **MRI**...
10. Recollections of lying on the **beach**/ in my garden. Blue sky, breeze in the soft sway of my hammock, a blissful experience. The feel of the black fabric was so soft. The suspension of the four corners allowed my arms and legs to feel weightless, **womb-like** feeling. Beautiful.
11. The installation being in the groove, the waters sound a nearby river. I thought into focus trust and how fragile it is, how easily it could be destroyed. I very much enjoyed participating. Thank you. I liked the urgency of the music sounds, the water which is major symbol for me and the blue sky at night effect through the Tim Burton **trees**. The overall effect was centring, bringing present moment awareness into focus, a redefining of importance.
12. No particular connection as such- the space of the installation felt quite self-contained and of itself. The audio content reminded me of the chime you occasionally hear in calm spaces such as spas. Visually/ physically I was reminded of **tent** and shelter and lying in them at night but nothing else too specific.
13. It didn't evoke a particular familiar feeling. There were familiar elements but it was nice that I wasn't sure where they came from. It felt like a ritual. Maybe a feeling before bedtime. Or a distant memory from being a **baby** in a cuddle. Or the passage from life to death or even the opposite.
14. It evoked a feeling of being underwater-for me it brought back memories of swimming in the **sea** on holiday in general, more specifically of diving in Gaza. It also brought back memories of my **childhood** when water was a constant element of my week as I went swimming.
15. Floating in the Mediterranean **Sea** alone in the summer evening, mainly from the visual stimulation!
16. The artwork resembles a **beach**. The feeling of the sand, the air and the sky. Combining this with slow music evoked connection to a real beach. But this was interrupted when music became more intense.
17. I was drifting in my memory, **forests**, churches, playgrounds.
18. The same section (5/6 min) reminded me of a water **garden** I had visited in Malaysia, which was a lovely experience. Very tranquil and still.
19. It reminded me of a time when I was **younger** and my family and I went to the **beach** and I was playing hide and seek and I hid behind this big rock structure that was near the water but closed over enough that I was in the dark. At the time, it scared me a little but at the same time I felt relaxed and this experience provoked a similar feeling of relaxation.



20. The black ragged material had a ghost-train effect. I used to swim in the **sea**. One morning, I swam over a bed of black sea-weed. I was reminded of the eeriness of that day; although not so frightened. I felt alone. Reminded of being in an opium den I saw in a film on TV last night. Also, as alone in a **tent** one night, waiting to sober up. And falling asleep, drunkenly behind some curtains in a dance hall.
21. It was a little like being awake at night when **camping** outside, but the installation was more relaxing and intimate and had more of an effect on my body.
22. I thought about my nephew hanging out or maybe myself as a **child** playing under or in hideouts.
23. As I said, I felt the sense of waking up at night or waking from slumber to see the sky overhead. This was when I opened my eyes and saw the blue light through the clothing...Maybe a reminder of sleeping in a strange bed as a **child**. This feeling of the unfamiliar was very fleeting and then I was back in the space.

## A 2 Data Transcription Questionnaire Waste-is-land

9 groups' feedback throughout the exhibition from 23.04 till 30.04, reflective writing upon them and visual documentation of the outcomes

Number of participants 22

Recurrent themes:

Calm, relaxed: 19 participants: 85%

Warmth, tactility, smell: 15 participants: 65%

Childhood: 6 participants: 24%

Gardening: 13 participants: 55%

Slowing-down, timelessness: 13 participants: 55%

Freeing, playful: 9 participants: 40%

Immersive, meditative: 7 participants: 28%

### Questions

1. What was the effect of the installation/artwork space on your mood during the course of your experience of the installation? (Was this effect consistent or did your mood change during your exposure to the piece?)
2. What was the effect of exposure to the artwork on your body? Could you describe any sensations and how you perceived your body during and after exposure to the artwork?
3. Did the compresence of the others influence you in any sense? How did you experience the eventuality of being seen by an accidental audience?
4. Was there any change in your awareness of time's passing whilst within the installation? (Did you sense any slowing or acceleration of your perception of time in comparison with ordinary everyday experience?)
5. Did your presence within the artwork evoke connections with any particular personal experiences (of particular environments and places)? If yes, which? Please feel free to describe them without a requirement to mention place-names of people or any other identifying details.

Group 1

23.04.2018

-3 persons (I will be counting myself) both have artistic backgrounds, ages 20-25 years old)

P 1:

1. Apprehensive before experience, however quickly settled into role, finding **calm** within my movements. Touching the **warm** earth/ moss was quite sensory and cathartic as a result.
2. I felt my body becoming more exposed to the soil as I walked through it, held it, allowed it to pour through my hands.
3. I felt affinity with others as we were performing same actions.
4. From early on in performance, the effects of **tactility**, aural and visual blocked outside distraction, I did not feel as if time moved at all whilst in the space.

5. Working with natural materials evoked **childhood** memory of digging in the **garden** and playing with mud. **Smell** of earth is a strong memory trigger.

P 2:

1. I was happy to take part of it and the way to investigate a place of the school not really easy.
3. That is strange because I forget the fact that takes place in Glass box, but I have had the feeling to be very close with the two other persons. So, fact to be in this little place make me the feeling to be outside the school.
4. That changes my perception of time because we have taken the time to manipulate the clothes, the ground. The sound piece sounds like a clock during the performance.
5. This artwork evokes me connection with a moment last semester: I had some **vegetables** (Kiel) in a gallery of my school and I used some ground (soil) to put to them. But at this moment I didn't have taken enough time, so I think this moment in the glass box can help me to better consider preparation, manipulation and installation. That remembers me moments when I am helping my boyfriend (farmer) in his **farm** when we use veil.

Group 2

25.04.2018

-4 persons (3 of them with artistic background, ages 40-50 years old)

P 1:

1. The effect that the installation/artwork had on my mood was initially **calming**. The **smell of the earth** helped to slow my thoughts down and bring me to a slightly less anxious mood. During the experience, I **relaxed** and enjoyed time. Occasionally feeling like physically responding to the sound. At these moments, my mood became more empathic to the other participants because I did not want to interfere with their experience too much.
2. The effect of exposure to the installation to my body –my hands heated up with the **warmth** of the soil. My hands are dry with handling the soil. My bare feet felt the texture of different sizes of pieces of earth. I concentrated on listening during the time in the installation and then sometimes became less aware until I heard a word, or a certain sound pulled my attention back. During the work, I noticed how small my hands were when I lifted two handfuls at a time. I was aware of my hair acting as a curtain between me and others in the space.
3. The compresence of the others in the space and having instructions to work as a group, made me want to engage with them. The presence of spectators made no difference to my actions. I did acknowledge spectators in a positive way by smiling at them.
4. I did not experience a change in the feeling of the passage of time but I did not feel that time was pressured within the space. Time ran as it runs, I did not anticipate an end and tried to remain in each moment.
5. Yes. The experience reminded me of holidays during **primary school** where I ran about barefoot for 2 months. I spent a lot of time on my own and played with **vegetation** and stones. Mixing soil and water in a basket.

P 2:

1. Initially I felt uneasy as the performance was out of my comfort zone. During the event, I felt **relaxed** and **immersed** in the creative process of making. I enjoyed and was surprised by the warmth of the soil. However, I felt myself searching for a purpose wished to connect the draped fabric with the ground.
2. The performance had a contrast of mild feelings. First a playfulness reminding me of **playing** with my children outdoors. However, I also felt sinister or graveyard like. This feeling especially emphasized by the cotton cloth made me think of decay.
3. I was a little mindful of the accidental audience towards the end when I felt my contribution was complete.
4. The start felt too **slow**. The making of the sculpture was more relaxed. The end felt labored to me.
5. It reminded me of my A level art with the immersion of exploring a creative and tactile process rather than one with any particular intention or goal. It also reminded me of the old priory (13<sup>th</sup> monastery) which was excavated when I was a **teenager**. Also, my brother's land art, during his art study at college. I also thought of weeding my **garden**.

P 3:

1. Mood- my mood changed over the period transitioning into a **calm**, quiet state, sensed by my heart rate slowing.
2. Very much into the sensate body-tactile journey, the **heat** of the earth, the feel of the different cloth on my forearms.
3. Self and other was very present for me, working together on a task, sensing, responding. I was aware of the accidental audience but this did not influence my movement or body.
4. A **slowing down**, a sense of stillness.
5. Connection to moss- awn place-Ireland-Japanese **gardens**- a connection to being in Japan and being/**immersed** in place- Zen gardens. Hanging lichen from trees.

I delighted in the **warmth** and texture of the soil on my hands and feet (had to take socks off through the exploration- wish I had them off from the start).

Brushing up against the cloth on my arms was a delicate sensation.

Always aware of cooperation, how others perceive the process-what is finished- how another will interject to what you have created I sensed as complete- another will change and transition. Intriguing- curious.

Loved the ritual sense of the installation- sacred space.

-2 persons, both have artistic background, ages 35-40

P 1:

- 1-3. Interaction with initiator/ instigator of installation, installation grew into performance.
4. Time is relative, performance time is **time-less**; not time-based.
5. Installation from Sept/ Oct 1989, Belfast, UU, Ballroom, Orpheus Building: ink drawing with poem and animal entrails with electric wires from coat hangers (by Keike)

Group 4

26.04.2018

-4 persons, two have artistic background

P 1:

1. Initially a feeling of sadness which changed to hope (fullness).
2. The dry soil was surprisingly **warm**. **Calming** sensation as the process kick over (curious about the sound/ voice)
3. Enjoyed being part of a small team/ group. Pleased about the small audience ... in the experience of being in an "art set out".
4. Sense of **slowing down** and being reflective.
5. Connection with **gardening**. With Performance/ Actions personally with a grave. The line between the wild cherry blossom and the Lilac is a wonderful time.

P 2:

1. My mood was one of **calm** and reflection. I did not perceive any change in mood.
2. I was aware of the sensation of the soil- dry, dusty and gritty. I was also aware of the soundtrack 'behind' me although this was more in the background. My sense of **smell** was heightened- a mixture of dust and damp- not unpleasant. I felt **calm**. I was aware that I was in a group and wanted to act in a collaborative manner with the others- as if I was striving for a consensus in our activity.
3. I was aware of some passerby in the street, this made me smile at what some of their questions might be.
4. Time passed in a neatened **calm** way.
5. It reminded me of **playing** in a riverbank when I was about 10- making structures, digging and building. The **smell** also reminded me of playing in the Bod Meadows as a **child**.

P 3:

1. At the start it felt strange, unusual. But as time went on, we became more familiar with the task and with each other.

2. It felt good to **touch** the soil and the clothes and it was interesting to hang them up.
3. The audience look didn't distract, hardly noticed them.
4. NA
5. Overall it was a quiet, **calm** atmosphere.

Group 5

26.04.2018

-6 persons, 5 have artistic background, ages 20 to 70

P 1:

1. My mood changed.
2. I needed to pee and realized the **smooth** comfort feeling of the floor on my foot. I like being barefoot.
3. Probably...existentially/ don't know.
4. I guess when I think about a task that I am doing, I don't think that it was any difference of a sense of time. But I am not sure if I am aware of the time when doing those tasks.
5. It did everything that I do connects me with other situations and experiences.

P 2:

1. I was more awake and more aware of my surroundings. I felt **comfortable** but felt silly when I noticed people watching.
2. I **slowed down** but I haven't noticed any special effect on my body.
3. I felt more confident because other people were doing the same or similar things. It was an emotional support.
4. It felt like time was going fast, but everyone **slowed down**. Although I didn't pay attention to time. In fact, I even forgot about all the other things I have to do.
5. It represented a family-like event and found a lot of symbolism in the actions. Like sharing and respect. I also noticed at the end that I felt like I should continue cleaning because the older generation still continued to clean. When I handed over soil, I was thinking if I do, will they accept it?

P 3:

1. The requirement of no talking set a mood which I can only describe as **meditative**.
2. I felt that once I stepped into the installation I was immediately draw to my feet. Walking barefoot allowed me to feel the piece more than just with my hands. It was **freeing** and still feel the sensations.
3. Having others in the space only served to bring me out of the **trance-like** state I was in, in the beginning. However, as the artwork went on, being aware of the others/ they became part of the trance.

4. It made me feel **slower** but then I realized I had not control of the time and when I stopped worrying about it, I didn't notice.
5. The **smell** and feel of the dirt reminded me of fields and entry ways in which I used to play as a **child**. They all kind of meld into one, non-specific place. The best word to use is nostalgia.

P 4:

1. **Quiet**, focused, a little nervous of being in a strange group.
2. My body was **warm**; some nice bending, crouching and stretching.
3. The compresence was generally supportive. The possibility of being viewed would have increased my focus on the task.
4. The time felt **short**. I could have stayed for longer if we had contracted for a long time. It would be interesting to know how we would have spent the time e.g. changing the clothes positions, dusting the floor etc.
5. At the end, lifting the dusty soil reminded me of picking up a pinch of snuff! Continuing the cleaning process reminded me of performance artists maintaining their focus and endurance on a task.  
We had lilac in our **garden** at home and live plant was reminiscent of this. Seaweed hanging from underneath a pier.

P 5:

1. I found myself in a mood of curiosity a start, then as the time past I felt a mood of **reflection** of what the task meant in a symbolic way.
2. I felt that the exposure to the artwork was **freeing** in a way that at the start maybe I just did not want my hands dirty but by the end I didn't care.
3. I noticed people looking from outside, but I enjoyed that as it may leave a thought with them.
4. At the start, I was unsure of time of the task in the installation but as time continued, I felt it would take as much time as needed.
5. I felt the whole experience felt to me as a reflection of moving on in life. Exposing the decaying relationships so to speak, to separate, to move from the bad to good, old to new. The decayed under the new life.

Group 6

27.04.2018

-4 persons, two of them have artistic background, ages 30-40

P 1:

1. My mood fluctuated between **calm** and methodical- I knew what needed to be done so I began to trust my body in its activities. At times I felt lighter.
2. During exposure to the artwork my body began to **relax**. The earth and the sensations of the cloth were comforting and elemental. The most felt safe, the most wonderful in its thread-like complexity. The overall experience was one of developing trust- **trust** in myself and in others as I began to open up and communicate.

3. The appearance of an audience was startling at first, because they were so quiet and unobtrusive. I had not noticed them arrive so content and **focused** was I in the task. When I did see them, it was the slight bewilderment on their face that made me **relax** and carry on- they were there to watch and I was happy to share the experience. The others in the room influenced the poetry of the movement and rhythm of the earth-shifting through hands and fingers, ducking under cloth, stretching, exploring a button, a seed, a babble.
4. Time was not on issue while I was absorbed. At the beginning I wondered how long it would take four pairs of hands to empty the suitcase, but gradually that thought lost significance and the experience became natural and **slow**. There was a tightening of time at the end, as we all stood together and observed the piece, the inevitability of the experience coming to a close seemed to shrink that previous **expansion** of time.
5. The experience of lifting soil took me back to a previous relationship where I planted the **garden** in a tiny square outside the house. It was the only place that was mine to go to, and as the relationship died, so did the flowers.

#### P 2:

1. I felt **playful** and curious as the experience progressed. I felt a lighters and joy. At times a little unusual, and also impacted by what others were doing- feeling a sense of communication or being part of an entity outside myself.
2. I felt a remembrance of my body- after sitting behind a desk all day, reading, to remember that I'm a physical creature. I was surprised by the heat of the soil, attuned to ... and bumps and spongey textures- afterwards, washing and then air- drying my hands was a more changed, conscious experience- all the elements in a 2-minute space!
3. The others were a continual surprise. I was struck at one moment when all three were around the pot, pouring soil in with the same stand and gesture. I felt both **connected** and also outside and felt throughout the fluctuation between the two. The accidental audience added to the inside/ outside oscillating- at times I felt it was a performance, at times a very internal experience.
4. I wasn't aware of time until the end, when we stayed in the room looking at our creation. Because it was over in my mind time seemed **slower** and elongated.
5. It seemed like a day at the **beach**, or like being a **child** again in the **garden** or the sandpit. I felt small again and silly- I am not sure that there is one particular memory this relates to, or whether it is an imagined past, or an idea gotten from watching children play.

#### P 3:

1. I felt separated from the outside world in a good way. Time stopped for a while. I felt **playful**. I was transmitted to the countryside. I felt **focused** on the task.



2. Very strong but satisfying **smell**. I'm OCD so I felt a bit annoyed stepping on the dirty floor, but I used that in a creative way. Convinced myself that it's worth the suffering. I engaged on working on something visual and I enjoyed the result. It gave me satisfaction. I felt tuned with the sound.
3. Being with others in the space made it a very **playful** experience and it opened up possibilities of collaboration. I felt like the 4 of us were isolated from the outside. I didn't really pay attention on what was happening outside.
4. I did feel more **relaxed**, as the time passed. More concentrated on the task. More aware of the space and of my feelings.
5. Memories of **gardening**, the rain, walks in the forest. Also, memories of trying to avoid something dirty. Very strong resemblance to the feeling I get when I am making my work in the studio. Trying to create something out of the given materials.

Group 7

28.04.2018

-4 persons, 3 of them with artistic background, ages 30-40

P 1:

1. Yes, I feel **relaxed**.
2. Same, relax.
3. I don't notice.
4. No, same.
5. Yes, when I was **kid** and love play with sand.

P 2:

1. I felt quite **relaxed** throughout.
2. Other than relaxed I really enjoyed that the project had effects for all sensations. **Smell**, sound, **touch**, visual.
3. I think it worked really well as a collaboration. I didn't mind that others could see me neither I felt pressed in any way. I kept my freedom and made my decision when I wanted to act and when I wanted to observe others act.
4. I would say yes, mostly towards the end of the experience (**slower**).
5. Not with my own personal experiences. Mostly it made me think of the circle of life (life from death and reverse) and nature's ability to adapt and eventually create life.

P 3:

1. Meditative, I fell into a daydream state as the event progressed. The **smell** for me was the most evocative and I sensed it immediately. I was interested in observing others interaction with the activity and the space.
2. I felt my body **relax** and became quite sleepy. I had a headache when I arrived but now it's gone!

3. The external audience (which I didn't really notice) seemed to make the temporality within space seem **slower**.
4. Time felt as if it **slowed down**.
5. Yes, the smell brought me back to my childhood and reminded me of a very particular friend from my childhood. For some reason it evoked the memory of my friend's grandmothers house which was situated on an ancient mound near Lough Neagh.

Group 8  
29.04.2018

-4 persons, 3 of them with artistic background, ages 20-45

P 1:

1. I was unsure with myself to begin with, but I soon realized that it was our space and I could do what I wanted, and this made me feel more **relaxed**.
2. My senses feel more heightened; I felt self-conscious in the beginning but now feel more aware of my body in a positive way. I enjoyed feeling the **soil**. My body feels **calmer** now.
3. I forgot that there were others around us. At one moment I got distracted by an interaction outside and I remembered where we were.
4. Not really. I wasn't aware of time.
5. Yes, it reminded me of how I used to **play** with the grass as I sat listening to talks during schools. I've always enjoyed manipulating things in my fingers, and this drew many memories for me. Thoughts about growing **vegetables**, playing on **the beach**, hanging washing, acting in plays.

P 2:

1. It was a **calming** experience and provoked a sense of consideration towards actions within community given the shared task.
2. The experience led to awareness for variation (creative responses) when carrying out a repetitive task, utilizing material.
3. There was an ability to connect with innocence and **playfulness**.
4. There was a **slowing down** of time from considered connectivity to cerebral action through primal associations.
5. I felt it evoked a desire to play, draw and sculpt, with the ...of the space.

P 3:

1. I didn't feel much mood change as the time was very short.
2. NA
3. Accidental audience is no problem. Almost a nice thing offering the potential to become **immersed** knowing that somebody might see it with interest. A degree of behavior to allow space for others and not being destructive of other people's actions.

4. Not really, of time passing slowly or quickly but being aware of having to take a bus. I would have liked more time to not be remotely concerned with time.
5. Reminded of **gardening** (not that I do this) and also of previous moments in earth and the good feeling of it in the **hand**.

Group 9

30.04.2018

-2 persons, both of them with artistic background, ages 35- 60

P 1:

1. **Quieted, slowed down**- respectful of material and another individual
2. **Dryness** of soil in my hands and mouth, careful attention acquired-**slow** movements-ease and **slow** breathing.
3. Co-presence did influence me through a sharing of details and attention to the other's movements and actions. Very occasionally I was aware of viewers or others outside.
4. Was aware of taking care and working with materials in a sensitive way which did take time. I think the actual time was a bit longer than I had realized.
5. Reflections on spring or re-birth-care for those who are dead and lost. A memory of **gardening** and finding our lost things in the soil- soil that has been covered over for some time= and was dry! The dryness of the soil reminded me also of summer ...in hot hands where dust rises from farms- when walking in the **fields** or tracks. The stampede of cows down a muddy lane after 2 weeks without rain.

### A 3 Sky-field-1 Data Transcription of the guided discussion

Number of participants in total 30 (free flow)

Number of participants in the guided discussion: 13

Recurrent themes:

Immersed, meditative: 13 participants: 100%

Focused: 3 participants: 25%

Detached, bored: 6 participants: 45%

Sensual, playful: 3 participants: 25%

Nervous: 3 participants: 25%

Efficient: 5 participants: 38%

Introduction by the researcher, giving information about the notion of Butoh-body and its 'western' references in contemporary arts, the immersion effect that I am looking for through my research.

Researcher's question: Which was your strongest impression of this piece and if you could connect it to any previous experience of yours.

#### Participant 1

-What I brought to this experience was accumulation of being tired after a long day. I went from feeling interested to getting very tight and wanting to be the best rice picker in the room. Develop my rice picking skills.

-Researcher: So, you were competitive?

-No, not so much competitive, I wanted to do my best for me (laughs). That is funny because I have ended only feeling sore in my legs. There was an element of boredom in that, then I reached a threshold and I wanted to start playing with it. Then I have started to do 'one for you and one for me'... some people responded, and some people did not. Then I thought I might have stopped. So, it was a mixture of things really and as I said probably what I brought here was feeling tired anyway and maybe not that open to it as I would have been this morning. To summarise it was a bit of...there was **immersion** in it, then that went into **boredom** and then I found I was **focused** on the film again. Not really aware of the noises but becoming absorbed from the film, so it was really a mixture.

-Researcher: So, you have changed many states of presence...

-Yes.

- Researcher: You have been inside for half an hour more or less?

-I was inside for 20 minutes, then took a break and came in again.

- Researcher: When you had this sensation of **playfulness**, did you follow it?

-I did for a while and then I stopped. There was a mixed feedback and I was uncertain in my part and I thought there is an element of seriousness and quietness so I felt I would be disrupting the atmosphere with my thing.

#### Participant 2

-The very first experience at the door when they told me that I can only wear white. You can only participate if you wear white.

-So, that's the reason many of you did not take part to it? Actually, it was desirable to wear white and the reason is that it fits the whole atmosphere visually and the more practical idea was that the film's projection can work on your clothes so that you can be part of it.

-I was interested watching people participating, in this sort of **ritual** of separating rice and flour...because I did not really know what it is. It was interesting because it took me a while going in and literally be **immersed** in it because I was watching people doing something. But then what was the dominance of the video and the sound had a very hypnotic effect. So, I was getting drawn away. But it was interesting to see the different ways that different people did it. It was also like looking at a mirror yourself doing something. Some people were more impatient and at the end somebody found out it was easier to blow it. There was a sense of trying to do it more **efficiently**, but it was not about that, it was about just to be there.

Participant 1

-No, it was about doing it efficiently! (Laughs)

Participant 2

-I was just to watching people and, in a sense, then became very **meditative**, it was actually nearly a holy thing. If you did not know what it was about you would think there is a strange religious issue, you would think: 'what's their god'?

Participant 1

-Also, it was interesting watching people's facing appearing through different holes and shapes. (through the clothesline curtain)

Participant 2

-But also, I was thinking that you were separating things right there and these (the birds) were all together...The way the birds moved, there was a continuity like an opposite action taking place of dividing rice and flour.

Participant 3

-Researcher: It is so frustrating to know that you could not participate because you did not wear white!

-I came about 7:30, was very busy doing my own stuff. I thought I could participate if I wanted to, it felt it would not be a problem, but the texture of flour is really irritating me. If I entered, I would have to take it till the end and then ask for moisturising my hands and flour is just like putting your nails down the back door for me. Flour has that sensation for me in my hands. Even when I am baking (laughs)

So, my question was why flour and why rice, why is it a canvas in a square rectangular shape, why four bags...So, automatically I looked at the materials, the structure, the space, where do the clothes come from, why would they suspend there, is the projection in relation to the materials on the floor? And how does that relate to the sound. All there were **questions** working in my head. So, then I was watching people being very **nervous** at the beginning and then started to get a rhythm, an amount of body confidence in the action they were making. I was watching their decision making. So, I had a lot of questions about your decisions of selecting the material and shapes. There are other parts of the world where white is a colour for spiritualism and then you did set up a **ritual** for people to participate.

-Researcher: So, it was more provoking questions to you than being immersed in the space from your saying?

-I was immersed with questions. I went between the two, because I did not participate in the centre but was still here as a body.

-Researcher: As a witness...

Participant 7

-Sorry, a question there, Eleni, are you suggesting or taking a perspective that being **immersed** has to do with being in pure sensation rather than also...? We can be engaged through questioning something; we can be engaged in the space by an intellectual engagement. So, are you taking one perspective?

Researcher: Yes, immersion in the way that I am defining it within my research, has to do with being connected with your senses and your brain at the same time without having conceptual questions without being involved bodily. In a way my initial idea of this piece was participatory. I was thinking that people would have an experience of it only if they have been inside it. Because you have to engage with a specific posture, understand what the material is, develop your own way to divide it. It is much more elements into play physically.

#### Participant 4

-I perceived a contrast to your previous projects and seeing all this white it was like almost everything was together in it and being an observer at the start I found it really interesting because I was unaware of all its elements. It was all very unsure about how it was going to come out. The sound was really interesting almost mechanical and then you saw people trying to do a technique and then you see another person trying to do the same technique, so it was like a mechanical continuum. Then whenever I started taking part, I had the sense of being **overwhelmed** of all this amount of rice and flour to be divided.

-Researcher: Some people can get stressed about that, 'having the job done' but not everybody

-In a way in my own mind I was just trying to observe the birds and find the action of the group. I was trying to see whether the one bird is **in control** and the rest is following its pattern. I forgot I was separating for a while, just got the motion of the movement in my hands, I forgot what I was doing. So, I had to concentrate back to the task.

-Researcher: Had this sensation of forgetting the task, happened from time to time?

-I think yes, from time to time because you felt the texture and also with the sound, I got very **relaxed**. In a way I liked the feel of what is in your hand and I forgot to separate it.

#### Participant 1

-It became just an automatic, **meditative** experience watching the birds' murmurations. I also wondered why it is about rice and flour but then just became absorbed.

#### Participant 5:

-I felt **detached** by the sound and video because it was not really relating to what I was doing. But after a while the sound started to become very interesting, after having been bored for a while.

- Researcher: Once you were detached, then you became engaged.

-I had a series of **questions** about the rice, why the birds are flying. Watched the people being quite individual.

-Researcher: So, finally it stimulated a series of questions and associations?

-Yes, gradually all the elements started to become bigger. I thought that the piece had to do with what people start to do after a certain point when they are given the chance.

#### Participant 6

-I am not very associated with arts, I tried to understand what was happening in the room. But finally, I forgot about rice and just got **immersed** with the music.

-Researcher: Have you been inside the action?

-Yes, I was inside for a while, but I did not enjoy it and I preferred to enjoy the music.

-Researcher: You were not enjoying it because of the texture of the mix or for some other reason?

-I was immersed by the music and forgot about the rice. I did not want to follow the job, for me the music was more attractive.

Participant 5

-Yes, the music was very **immersive**.

Participant 7

-I arrived quite late, was not given instructions so I did not know what I was supposed to do. I got interested into the shapes of the clothing and was sneaking through it the gestures that were happening. I did not see any action, only gestures.

-Researcher: So, you were watching the floor from the clothesline?

-Yes, I was perceiving the gestures as such and the way that people were sensing themselves and then extending their sensations to the sound that the flour made by falling off the ground. Sensation that happens not just in one's hands but when you are moving. Then I was just walking around not in this ritualistic mind-set any more than in a **playful** mood.

- Researcher: But you did not feel you wanted to be part of it.

-No, I felt **detached**, I just preferred to watch it. And I wondered why only hands?

-Researcher: The gesture was only hands but the whole posture had to adapt to the space, you could not do this action if you were standing, and also however you had to look at what you were picking up but finally it was more a tactile experience because you had to distinguish things one from each other.

-Sometimes if we are doing a task like writing, we involve the rest of the body but when the activity is taking over, I tend to forget it unless it becomes painful. For example, now that I am talking, I do not pay attention to how my back is unless I bring my mind into there.

Participant 12

-The whole body was really the focus for me. The posture of the body, makes it boring and you don't pay much attention, but the gestures were really interesting.

Participant 2

-People were taking different postures.

Participant 12

-Yes, but it was not the posture itself but the efficiency. Trying to be **efficient** and look for a technique. They were developing and this was for me very interesting.

Participant 7

-You would not pay attention to your body unless you receive a tactile sensation in your back. The whole attention was given to the rice and flour.

-Researcher: It is true that as a witness you cannot really spot it but for me as a participant, I was aware of my body, after 1h and 10 min inside, I was feeling my body because of the pain.

Participant 8

-Is that really awareness, if you are feeling pain is because you were not aware. Every time we are doing an activity, for example, when I was working in the garden, I was so immersed that I would not feel my back. So, when you are immersed, you just forget your posture.

Participant 12

-I am trying to understand what you mean as immersion and I think that even by being in a corner observing you could have that. How is that one more important than other? So, you offered an experience that me as a witness, there were some moments I was really in, very interested in their hands, gestures and in the body developing also intellectually. I was interested to the process and seeing how people were copying each other and all this for me was fascinating. I was there, not

engaging with my body as you but through the body empathy, I got the sensation that is transmitted to you just by seeing the other having an experience. Or, even thinking, reflecting, figuring out what is happening there. I think that many people were actually **immersed** in different ways.

#### Participant 9

-I was dressed in white and I felt immediately entitled to step in. But then I was asking myself which the right way was to make sense of it, how do I do it effectively. I might have looked nervous but felt this was the more **effective** way. I did it for a while and then I stepped back and actually I got more **immersed** in it by standing and observing what happens around other people. Staying outside is much more being inside it. You start to wonder how these things connect between them, after a while, it becomes one.

Researcher: So, when you were inside, acting, you could not have this whole perspective of the space and connecting elements but had to be there.

-Completely **there**, in my hands.

#### Participant 14

-When you were inside did you feel more alone when you were inside than when you were outside connecting with the whole?

#### Participant 9

-It is not about being alone, it is more about being part of it. Because when you are there (in the action) you are completely inside.

Researcher: Perhaps because the action was very demanding?

-For me yes, to be honest maybe it was not mentioned to be effective but then what could the other thing be, a different thing? So, I thought a good challenge.

Researcher: Yes, I was sitting beside you and could perceive you were so nervous and started wondering, is he going to make it until the end keeping this pace with the rice? You were too energetic for doing this small task.

-The transition comes from the outside, the moment to relax needs some time. I jumped in immediately and I am used to be fast and effective.

#### Participant 10

-For me it is a bit difficult to reply. I felt there were two kinds of events at the same time. The action was quite interesting, and people had to divide between 'good and bad'. For me it was the membrane that divided the space of the action. However, I need some time to figure out what happened.

- Researcher: Did you take part inside?

-No, I did not. I think for me it was much more **intense** to observe the people than making the action. I know the feeling of rice and could imagine how it is to do it.

#### Participant 11

-I arrived a bit late, I was wondering whether I could join without being dressed in white and was glad to find out that there were people not wearing white!

Researcher: So, there was a kind of discrimination created between people wearing white and not! It was not my intention.

-I was watching the clothes and had a sense of watching people within it without being able to figure out what they were doing. It just seemed soft and fluffy. I studied architecture for a year, and I was really annoyed that we were using a rectangular sheet on the floor. This is my previous experience.

I logged into the murmurations, the movement and the clothesline and everything started to be very concordant for a while. And I was happy because it looked **meditative** and I have not meditated today. And then I settled to it. Something occurred to me when I was watching people going through that creative and



destructive process, refining and loosing, seemed very complete to remove things somehow. When you handed me some rice to my hands, and I loved the feeling of it. I found it intensely **sensual** as a feeling. My tendency after doing something for a second time, is more stilted whereas the first time would be more natural. The second time I am trying to recreate something I did before. I resisted the temptation to mess up.

-Researcher: But you have had this temptation and you did not do it, this is interesting.

-Yes, maybe if I was alone in the room, I would take my clothes out and go in it. It almost felt too nice to experience it among other people. It gives a very nice feeling. I like glue, I am trying to work on improving my boundaries.

#### Participant 12

-I did not read the description so I did not know what to do. I have started doing the action because there were so many elements in the room I could not understand. The installation, the video and the strong sound...I read the paper and knew there was rice and flour and thought I want to touch it and then I got a bit **obsessed** with I want to make it the best. I thought it was really nice to do it for a whole hour. It helped me to ignore everything else in the room. In a way my hands started to do it.

-Researcher: The initial reason that you joined the action has been that everything was overwhelming?

-It was not overwhelming, it was **annoying**. There was an installation, a nice video and the sound. All those pieces which I did not think they should be connected. I thought that this was enough, and I separated it from the rest.

-Researcher: How did you feel when you stepped out of the action?

-I tried to focus only in one thing...

#### Participant 14

-I arrived a little after 7. I enjoyed the experience, I found it quite different to the other two you have done. I cannot really say in which way. I enjoyed being audience. You seemed very relaxed, comfortable and natural in the process of doing.

-Researcher: It was not a performance...

-I was watching different people doing this action and everybody has a slightly different body posture and way of working the fingers in relation to the flour and rice. And this intrigued me, I was watching it all the time. But I was fascinated by the rhythm and movement of the birds' flight, as I was watching the development. I preferred the first version than the distorted version of the video. I also enjoyed the lighting that was very soft. I enjoyed people watching through the holes as children. Found interesting also the shape of the clothesline, there is a kind of organic aspect between the semi-circular forms. I was interested to the relationship when people are soothing the rice, you get shadows in all this rice chaos that reflect the shadows of the clothing. I was interested in your attempt to take the audio and video to cohere, I saw coherence but also dissonance. In the sound there were disjunctive moments. Maybe this could be smoothed out. Also, I thought, since people found it sometimes boring. How would it be if people were doing only this action for different duration? So, time is the question, how long or short enough is it. And also, to decide whether you want the time to have those upside downs.

-Researcher: Thanks for that, I have another question that has to do with time perception: How did you perceive time's passing within the experience? Anybody can reply now.

#### Participant 13

-It is difficult to reply to that unless you connect it to something else. For example, being bored is connected with creating long perception of time. When I came here, I thought I do not want to stay to a durational piece for as long as the artist decides, I want to leave if I do not like it. But then I saw that there was a process going on here, not a repetition. It was good time for me, maybe 20 min more would be too much for me.

Participant 3

-I think one hour is a limit for people to attend. You have to be more liberal if you want the piece to last longer.

Participant 14

-People have different limits. Some people get bored easier than others. But what happens when people become **bored**, they may come back and get **immersed** in different levels. Watching the body position of people, this can vary from time to time too.

Participant 7

-I think the piece offered more elements provocative in sense of timing, so if I was bored watching an action I could go back to the installation or the video and move my attention across the room. I could shift my attention and watch different sense of speed occurring between the people, the video and so on. So, every time I got bored and I wanted a new stimulus, the new stimuli were in another speed. So, my sense of time was constantly shifting.

Participant 3

-But also, how the space was organized, you could not pick your moment and move because you have had a sense of being trapped.

Participant 14

-This is true, I think if people actively can move around in the space rather than getting stuck.

-Researcher: This was created because of the architecture of the space because you had to watch the video?

Participant 3

-No, you could not move because there was nowhere to go. The flow was stuck.

Participant 14

-Which was the initial idea you have had about this piece, did you want it participatory, or collaborative or did you have any previous intention?

-Researcher: Yes, I wanted to be more participatory. I did not expect to have that many witnesses that they are not involved.

Participant 14

-I think that if we did not have too much stimuli, we would be more collaborative. I felt everybody was extremely individualistic and when you gave me the rice, I felt I have to share it. I was very interested why people had to grab a space and not move or expand.

Participant 3

-I think you are the person that leads it. So, you were the first person to imitate. It was good to have the option.

Participant 14

-You could feel very **immersive** even watching people doing the action. I felt as if I was doing it.

Participant 2

-It reminded me of Dalai Lama **ritual** with monks. I could see similarities except from people's **agitation**.

Participant 13

-I really like this work because it offered so many options for people to do or not to do things. There was a little world opening here and for me was fascinating. Observing things, you see different personalities. Some people were more individualistic, **efficient**. If you close it, you might have a limitation to the action. It depends what you want.

Participant 14

-Everybody had different versions of clothing, white, this no-colour...There were different kinds of it. The sound could be more uniform and less disruptive...

#### **A 4 Data transcription written feedback *Sky-field 2***

Number of participants in total: 16

Recurrent themes:

Calm, relaxed: 16 participants: 100%

Engaged: 4 participants: 25%

Collaborative: 10 participants: 60 %

Slow: 8 participants: 50%

Quick: 5 participants: 30%

Playful: 5 participants: 30%

#### **Group 1 – 8 participants**

**Question 1: Which was your experience of the preparatory stage of body-scan? Did you find it enjoyable and relevant?**

**P.1:** The time to **relax**, slowly in a staged way. I was distracted by my tensions but slowly relaxed.

**P.2:** I enjoyed being able to **meditate** and take a moment to breath and bring awareness to my body.

**P.3:** Found it **relaxing**, a good way to prepare for a performance. Becoming aware of the body before using it to make a performance. Helped remove nerves/ awkwardness.

**P.4:** I think it was relevant, although I find it difficult to **relax** through mindfulness with others' presence.

**P.5:** Important for the following perform-action.

**P.6:** Personally, I was late so I was confused in the sight of people in overalls, but it was relevant.

**P.7:** The guided voice and the dark room with overhead projection.

**P.8:** Very **relaxing**. Put body into trancelike state- clear mind for the performance.

**Question 2: What was the effect of the installation/ artwork space on your mood during the course of your experience of the installation? (Was this effect consistent or did your mood change during your exposure to the piece?)**

**P.1:** Before the space was rather constricting- even obstructive, but later when focusing on the active input I became unaware of the space.

**P.2:** I felt very **calmed**, there was moments where my happiness and mood increased. I enjoyed the materials used on the performance.

**P.3:** Beginning uncertainly of how to engage with materials and participants. Which changed once performance began enjoyed reacting to materials. Uncertain of timing of piece meant interest levels changed due to uncertain when it would end.

**P.4:** My mood changed, I became **engaged**, sometimes physically and other times through observation of others. I thought about self in relation to materials and to others.

**P.5: Focusing** on this particular space and action.

**P.6:** My mood shifted quickly between the installation.

**P.7:** The ... feeling/ movement in the lens piece made me feel **uneasy**. Too much movement of film juxtaposed to the stillness of the room.

**P.8: Peaceful-** not really aware of my mood as my body was in autofocus.

**Question 3: What was the effect of exposure to the artwork on your body? (Could you describe any sensations and how you perceived your body during and after exposure to the artwork?)**

**P.1:** I was aware of temperature and my body. Also, my breathing was stressed at times within this action.

**P.2:** I felt more **relaxed**. My stomach was in pain during the body scan part and during the performance I forgot about it. My body was feeling free being able to explore movement and the materials.

**P.3:** Enjoyed tactile nature of workshop. Using materials, I previously hadn't worked with. Physical reactions to dust, noise, etc.

**P.4:** I enjoyed the video of starling murmurations and found it more **relaxing** than preparatory stage. I loved the sensation of material with my hands. My body was **active**, heightened sense of touch.

**P.5:** Being involved it was **relaxing** and together we created a beautiful image.

**P.6:** I felt I was anchored somewhere in the centre of my spine...

**P.7:** I felt more aware of my body, somewhat too self-aware.

**P.8:** Tingling in feet and legs. Hands did not in the work in performance.

**Question 4: Was there any change in your awareness of time's passing whilst within the installation? (Did you sense any slowing or acceleration of your perception of time in comparison with ordinary everyday experience?)**

**P.1:** Difficult to say. Before the action time was **slowed down** but during the action time was fairly **steady**.

**P.2:** There was moments when time was going very **slow** and my awareness to what was happening. But at the end the performance felt very **quick**.

**P.3:** Body scan time went **fast**. Performance varied in awareness of time. When I engaged the time-passing was not noticed. When I did not participate was more aware of time being **slower**.

**P.4:** Time passed inconsistently. Sometimes **slow/ fast**. I think this depended on my engagement.

**P.5:** Time did not play a role.

**P.6:** In the body scan time went **slowly**...however the second stage with rice felt timeless. In the dark it felt secluded from everywhere and when.

**P.7:** Time felt surreal, non-existent, yet **slow** and **calm**. It was peaceful and fun.

**P.8:** Time felt **slower** like as eternity, hooked while in trance and performance.

**Question 5: What was the effect (if any) of the compresence of other people during this performative event? Did you enjoy interacting with others or has this stopped you from being present to your own experience?**

**P.1:** At the start I more or less contributed in my own way, in a subtle way, but later had more **interaction** with others. At one point I offered an option as a kind of question within the group action for others to respond to my action or gesture, after a little when others did perceive my gesture and they responded in a like way. This led to a new movement or series of actions in the group contribution. I was glad that my action or question was understood by others.

**P.2:** I enjoyed **interacting** with others it made me more aware of what was happening.

**P.3:** Enjoyed **interaction** with others, less focused on yourself and spontaneity meant interesting interactions could occur. Changed my responses to materials.

**P.4:** The preparatory stage was challenging with other people, yet I enjoyed **interacting** with others during the event. My experience was more collective than individual.

**P.5:** Definitively **collaborative**.

**P.6:** I was very aware of others but in a lovely way. I was mesmerised by watching the light dance of their hands and fall down with the rice.

**P.7:** I enjoyed playing with others, it made me feel less self-conscious.

**P.8:** Started off with my own presence, as it went on started to work with others.

**Question 6: Did your presence within the artwork evoke connections with any particular personal experiences (of particular environments and places)? If yes, which? Please feel free to describe them without a requirement to mention place-names or the names of people or any other identifying details.**

**P.1:** I remembered aspects of my work in college in 1884/85 using sand and flows. I considered dust in old mills. I thought of trampolines and surfaces. I thought of birthday celebrations and “the bumps”. I thought of making food together and other sculpture processes.

**P.2:** Yes, a certain period of the day when birds fly. The materials reminded me of being with a person and activities.

**P.3:** I had memories of cooking, baking. Ingredients and using my hands. The messiness of flour over kitchen surfaces and the nightmare of cleaning up. Rice and flour being staple grains and food source for many cultures seems wasteful making it into artwork. No longer a source of nourishment and life.

**P.4:** No particular environment or place. I was very much centred and concentrated on the interactions and events that were occurring in my surrounding. It wasn't reflective but more proactive with others.

**P.5:** Natural events/ rain/ wind/ clouds.

**P.6:** Yes. And in one stage the rice was in mounds and territories. But they were shifting and being broken down and built up. My family is currently trying to find a new home, so I placed that connection onto it.

**P.7:** It reminded me of playing with sand at playschool. Freeing and fun, communication through movement not language.

**P.8:** Felt like I was at the beach or a child playing with the sand. Video of birds felt like waves at the beach. Not making sandcastles, just touching and playing with the texture of the sound.

## **Group 2- 8 participants**

**Question 1: Which was your experience of the preparatory stage of body-scan? Did you find it enjoyable and relevant?**

**P.1:** Preparatory stage, a welcome addition. Supporting arrival and transition.

**P.2:** It made me sleepy and soft, also quite **slow**. This was enjoyable but altered the way I came to the movement: I was sluggish, and a little bit zoned out at first.

**P.3:** Yes, relevant. It removed me from the time prior to entering the space.

**P.4:** It could be a bit shorter and has silences. The commanding voice disturbed the relaxing moments.

**P.5:** Relevant.

**P.6:** I found it very helpful to defocus on the outside world and to focus on the surroundings and the body **relaxation**.

**P.7:** I really loved the body scan. I **relaxed**, zoned out, fell asleep had a few dreams, woke up and did all that again from the start. I wondered though why it was recorded and it wasn't Eleni who delivered it.

**P.8:** Some of the language initially did not help to ground myself as I was focused on mannerisms rather than just being but overall it was a beautiful approach to **relaxing** and becoming aware in the present moment.

**Question 2: What was the effect of the installation/ artwork space on your mood during the course of your experience of the installation? (Was this effect consistent or did your mood change during your exposure to the piece?)**

**P.1:** My mood. Much **calmer**, open to experience sense of space and stillness from within, sparks of energy. Dynamism as contrast if time/ rhythm set before me. Fiery.

**P.2:** It was overall **playful** and attentive to how my body felt the things it was interacting with. The mood changed when we became a bit more violent or extreme tossing the rice-flour in the sheet.

**P.3:** My mood was quite consistent.

**P.4:** Lot of fun. Yes, my mood changed.

**P.5:** Consistent and becoming more **evolved**.

**P.6:** I had a sense of freedom that increased throughout the experience. As time went, I had a sense that I wasn't focusing on what would happen next but focusing on the present.

**P.7:** I enjoyed the space and the set-up. I liked the video and the sound. But when the experience started getting wilder, I think I wasn't ready or in the mood for this, so I felt a bit **frustrated**. I enjoyed the simple actions and tasks and the beginning but I guess I didn't reach that height that other participants reach that fast and I thought I could possibly reach that state if I had a bit more time in the space with the people.

**P.8:** The mood shifted and changed throughout the process, it felt like people merged and shifted with material and motions, adapting, changing, merging as new narratives and sensibilities emerged.



**Question 3: What was the effect of exposure to the artwork on your body? (Could you describe any sensations and how you perceived your body during and after exposure to the artwork?)**

**P.1:** Sense of skin, sense of breath. Attention brought to hands and fingers. Sense of weight and grounding through the process. As rice and flour in air. Some sense of alarm catching on chest as asthmatic. Tickly nose! After exposure the body feels **calm** and whole.

**P.2:** I found it **calming**. It made me want to move more gracefully, smoothly. But I really did or felt myself doing this.

**P.3:** Soft textures, skin sensation.

**P.4:** Nothing really special but I like the freedom we had to do whatever.

**P.5:** The body began integrating actually with the artwork.

**P.6: Relaxed and energized.** Relaxed as the performance took place and energised as I was leaving.

**P.7:** I really enjoyed the first part. It had a very positive impact on me. I thought that it was exactly what I needed at that point of the day. Enjoyed the task at the beginning. Simple, repetitive tasks have a positive effect on me. I liked the **playfulness** with the shadow and the light while playing with the rice and flour under the projector. I did find the wild part of the activity a bit frustrating as I wasn't ready emotionally or physically for something like this.

**P.8:** After the body scan the sound of the audio felt abrupt, almost a shock but this soon settled. The materials and bodies impacted my movement as we co-collaborated in processing and **playing** together. The smells of the flour sat in my mouth. The humming and laughter at times warmed my body.

**Question 4: Was there any change in your awareness of time's passing whilst within the installation? (Did you sense any slowing or acceleration of your perception of time in comparison with ordinary everyday experience?)**

**P.1:** Through body scanning time shifted/ changed. Sense of space/ air. Not aware of time passing in minutes/ seconds an openness to see what reveals itself in rhythm- space, silence, stillness.

**P.2:** The body scan felt like a long time, as if the time has **slowed**.

**P.3:** Not really, although it seemed like a lot of action in half an hour, many bodies contributed, too much action suddenly. I think of lunchbreak at school.

**P.4:** Yes.

**P.5:** Time seemed to 'flow' and dissolve.

**P.6:** The body awareness took some time to release the thoughts of the day but as time went on there was less sense of time.

**P.7:** Time was **delayed**. I did lose sense of time. Basically, I enjoyed that.

**P.8:** The sense of time went by very **quickly**, in both the body scan and action, or you could say it ceased all together at times as non-existent.

**Question 5: What was the effect (if any) of the compresence of other people during this performative event? Did you enjoy interacting with others or has this stopped you from being present to your own experience?**

**P.1:** The Sky-field task presented many more opportunities for **interaction**- sensing others and working as one. Intervals of connecting with different participants. Leading and following, initiating, finding new connections. Enjoyed the **play** of self and others.

**P.2:** I felt that **interacting** with others made it very enjoyable, although it made me less attentive to my awareness of self.

**P.3:** It was a **collective** experience from the start, so I always sensed myself as part of the group. Their presence allowed my presence.

**P.4:** Yes, I enjoyed it. I perceived some nice details of the light effects with the flour dust and the rice grains.

**P.5:** I enjoyed aspects of their **co-participant** engagement.

**P.6:** I felt I could choose to experience personal or interacting with others. I think the body awareness relaxed me to focus on my surroundings and made me feel that.

**P.7:** I enjoyed the presence and interaction at the beginning but not later.

**P.8:** It felt as though all bodies, human and non-human **merged** and flowed as one.

**Question 6: Did your presence within the artwork evoke connections with any particular personal experiences (of particular environments and places)? If yes, which? Please feel free to describe them without a requirement to mention place-names or the names of people or any other identifying details.**

**P.1:** Landscapes of the body, a sense of bone and sky, strong structure, rock and geological landscapes.

**P.2:** The smell of flour made me think of bread, and so I spent some time kneading the rice flour mix. It was a comforting movement and a feeling of productivity. But it also made me hungry.

**P.3:** New grange. The finger patterns. Reminded me of an exercise I had given students to not to use their hands (while drawing) so I took the opportunity to do the same.

**P.4:** Yes, at the kitchen with my mom.

**P.5:** Yes...rivers, mountains, airspace, moors, raining, floating, flying, earthling, digging, playing, being, inter-fusing in nature with other beings.

**P.6:** It reminded me of being alone in the beach when I was young. There were so many things I could choose to do. Listen, watch, touch, smell, or I could think. The performance gave a sense similar. Or I could choose to interact with the people I may have met.

**P.7:** No, it didn't make me think of other places.

**P.8:** The experienced morphed through different narratives, cycles in nature, cooking, cleansing, natural disasters, and tricksters.

### **Data transcription *Sky-field 2*, guided film discussion Group 1 (BA students)**

#### **Number of participants: 6**

**Researcher:** How did you perceive the body scan experience?

**P. 2:** I already have some experience of mindful meditation, so it was not a surprise for me.

**R:** But it was different to experience it with the group?

**P.2:** Yes, it was almost more challenging for me to do it in the group because I find it difficult to forget that I am aware of other things, the space...but that was also myself.

**R:** What about you? Did you have any previous experience of guided meditation?

**P.4:** Only once. Initially I felt like falling asleep and found it hard to relax. But then the light within the setting was helpful.

**R:** It is true that it is not easy to go through this experience of meditation unless you practice it for a long time and usually there is some kind of resistance under the form of sleepiness or difficulty to concentrate. There are different stages, it is not an easy thing to go through it.

**P.5:** I arrived a bit late so initially I was confused but then I found it good and enjoyed it.

**R:** What about you?

**P.6:** Basically, the body scan was helpful instead of stepping right inside the action. It is a preparatory stage that keeps your expectation higher. I have done it before but not guided. I had some difficulty with my knees...

**R:** I understand that. I should have explained before that is very important to have a comfortable position because if you feel all the time that you are aching you cannot go into it. There was also a chair there, I forgot to say that at the start.

**P.6:** It made me remember situations in Korea when people were sitting down kneeling (laughs).

**R:** Hope this was not negative! What about you?

**P.7:** It took me a long time to relax and I think my legs were aching. But I did relax and at the end I was much more into it. So, it was good to have it at the start, it allows you to trust the others. I would have liked a chair though. But the support of the wall was helpful.

**R:** Apart from the fact that it was not easy for everybody to relax, did you find that the body scan was a good way to start?

**P.1:** Yes, I think it was because when I was into it, I did not think of much. Also, I liked the material because it did not make me feel very clever.

**P.2:** Although I found it difficult with other people, at the end there was a sense of trust built instead if we had started straight away would have been more difficult.

**P.3:** Yes, I think that it was helpful cause it allowed me to empty my head as well as the material gave me a sense of freedom of movement because it was a nice kind of material to play with.

**R:** Is it because the material did not make you feel very clever? (Laughs) It is quite simple as material, so you don't feel you have to do something special.

**P.3:** Yes, as well the projection is guiding you.

**P.4:** I did find the body scan appropriate for what was following.

**P.5:** It was a nice idea to be in a circle before we start.

**R:** Also wearing the suit?

**P.5:** Yes, that was great.

**P.6:** That was very good, we were uniform, and we became part of the whole scene. I really liked the projection falling from the ceiling, started watching natural effects, clouds. Created a landscape. The size of the group I think was perfectly ok, one more would have been too much.

**R:** So, the body scan experience helped you?

**P.6:** Yes, to arrive to the space.

**R:** Since you were there also in the previous version of Sky-field where there was no body-scan would you say that you found it more difficult that time?

**P.6:** Sure, we were asked to step into the action and to separate the rice from the flour. This was very hard labor!

**P.7:** The suit was not in my size (laughs) so I was not very uniformed. But the body scan allowed me time to enter to the space.

**R:** After the body scan did the action feel organic? Did you feel like starting to move?

**P.2:** I think the projection energized me to start to do the action because I like the murmurations effect.

**R:** Do you mean that because there was movement in the projection you felt more inclined to step into the action?

**P.2:** The projection was not crystal clear, so this was inviting.

**R:** Did you sense the blurring effect in the video and did that influence you?

**P.7:** Yes, I felt something cyclic in the body in parallel with the murmurations and the pixilation connecting with the rice.

**R:** How did you perceive the group action and your own action? How did their presence influence your own? There were different stages into it, we were initially more individual into it, then started to collaborate etc. How did you feel within that, was it natural or did you feel that there was somebody leading?

**P. 1:** At some stage I was just happy to watch how people were moving, watching people's hands. When we were all holding the mat, I wanted it to be more balanced. So, I was trying to find the right balance.

**P.2:** I was at times active and other moments less; think was very individual into it at the start but at the end was very much collective.

**P.3:** I was aware that other people's actions influence my actions, so I did respond to them.

**P.4:** It was very much individual at the start and the got more comfortable into it.

**R:** So, in a way time was necessary to go through different stages?

**P. 5:** It was good to observe and feel what everybody else was doing. I enjoyed it visually and thought why not rising it up together and have good time. I felt more together towards the end.

**P.6:** It was interesting how everybody was influencing each other. Like for example lifting from one side actually triggered the rest. A kind of revolutionary act.

**P.7:** I watched for a while before I started. I suppose I entered slowly, very gently and trying not to destroy too much. Then there was more interaction and at the end I just sat into the floor watching. It was a very connecting thing.

**R:** Does anybody want to say anything more?

**P.7:** Time could have been longer. For example, if you had the action going on for 4 hours, then you could see what people do and what it could bring to people. If they fed up or if something happens between them. This space is awful because the sound and heat made it very claustrophobic. But after the body scan this reaction disappeared, I lost the space.

**R:** Did you mean because of the dimensions?

**P.7:** No, I mean more the psychological factor that it is an institutional bit. Body scan really helped.

**P.2:** Silence was really helpful. We were making decisions without talking to each other. Communicate with the body and collaborating.

**R:** It is true that there are cyclical actions regenerated throughout the same piece and if you stay longer more things happen.

**P.6:** Also, the fact that there is an end and a beginning is preventing things to happen. You need to set it a three hours' event.

**P.7:** I think that people who would want to have a durational experience would come. There might be a different group though and you would need to have more materials.

**P.2:** Yes, it is quite interesting that you are part of it and the material itself.

**P.7:** It could be messier then and that space would not work for four hours. Maybe we need to do it somewhere outside.

**R:** In the summer...anybody else?

**P.1:** Just want to say that in the start we were a bit chuckled but then when the voice was the only thing to hear everything flowed.

**P.6:** Also, you might need more space because we were a bit forced to stay where we were.

**R:** Ok, great. I think that's it. Hopefully you gained some ideas for your own practice and some insight about how a performative action might work. Thanks to all.

## **Ethical approval forms**

**B 1 RG3 Filter Committee Report Form (1)**

**B 2 RG3 Filter Committee Report Form (2)**

**B 3 RG1a APPLICATION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH ON HUMAN  
SUBJECTS**

## **B 1 RG3 Filter Committee Report Form (1)**

### **UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER RESEARCH GOVERNANCE**

Project Title The Body of the Relationship: A Practice Based exploration of the relationship between the Body and its Environment.

Chief Investigator Giuliano Campo

Filter Committee Arts Research UoA33

This form should be completed by Filter Committees for all research project applications in categories A to D (\*for categories A, B, and D the University's own application form – RG1a and RG1b – will have been submitted; for category C, the national, or ORECNI, application form will have been submitted).

Where substantial changes are required the Filter Committee should return an application to the Chief Investigator for clarification/amendment; the Filter Committee can reject an application if it is thought to be unethical, inappropriate, incomplete or not valid/viable.

**Only when satisfied that its requirements have been met in full and any amendments are complete, the Filter Committee should make one of the following recommendations:**

The research proposal is complete, of an appropriate standard and is in

- Category A and the study may proceed\* x
- Category B and the study must be submitted to the University's Research Ethics Committee\*\* Please indicate briefly the reason(s) for this categorisation
- Category C and the study must be submitted to ORECNI along with the necessary supporting materials from the Research Governance Section\*\*\*
- Category D and the study must be submitted to the University's Research Ethics Committee\*\*

Signed Brian Bridges Date 9/3/17

Chairperson/ Administrator of Filter Committee Brian Brides, Research Director UoA33

**\*The application form and this assessment should now be returned to the Chief Investigator. The Filter Committee should retain a copy of the complete set of forms.**

**\*\* The application form and this assessment should now be returned to the Chief Investigator so that he/she can submit the application to the UUREC via the Research Governance section. The Filter Committee should retain a copy of the complete set of forms for their own records.**

**\*\*\* The application form and this assessment should now be returned to the Chief Investigator so that he/she can prepare for application to a NRES/ORECNI committee. The Filter Committee should retain a copy of the complete set of forms for their own records.**



**For all categories, details of the application and review outcome should be minuted using the agreed format and forwarded to the Research Governance section**

Signed: Date: 9/3/17

*Chairperson/Administrator of Filter Committee*

*Seabed (immersive art installation), from:* A practice-based exploration of the relationship between the body and its environment.

Giuliano Campo

Arts Research UoA33

Brian Bridges, Research Director UoA33

**Please complete the following**

The application should be accompanied by an appropriate and favourable Peer Review Report Form (if not, the Filter Committee should be prepared to address this as part of its review). Please comment on the peer review (include whether or not there is evidence that the comments of the peer reviewers have been addressed).

The candidate demonstrates an appropriate understanding of the major ethical issues in implementing an audio-visual installation: a) Informed consent, b) Do not harm c) Respect for anonymity and confidentiality d) Respect for privacy

. Please provide an assessment of all component parts of the application, including questionnaires, interview schedules or outline areas for group discussion/ unstructured interviews

. Questionnaires and consent forms, risk assessments, and project plans have been assessed.

Please comment on the consent form and information sheet, in particular the level of language and accessibility.

The consent form and information sheet have been framed to present the key issues with clarity and to provide participants with opportunities to opt out at various times.

Please comment on the qualifications of the Chief and other Investigators.

Chief Investigator: Dr Giuliano Campo; extensive experience in performing arts practice-as-research and workshop facilitation

PhD student/researcher: Eleni Kolliopoulou; extensive experience as performing artist

Please comment on the risks present in conducting the study and whether or not they have been addressed.

Risks in relation to the physical space have been managed and addressed via a Health and Safety inspection and comprehensive risk assessment.

Please indicate whether or not the ethical issues have been identified and addressed.

Ethical issues in relation to informed consent, privacy and anonymity have been addressed.

Please comment on whether or not the subjects are appropriate to the study and the inclusion/ exclusion criteria have been identified and listed

Subjects are appropriate to the study, with clear inclusion criteria.

## **B 2 RG3 Filter Committee Report Form (2)**

### **UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER RESEARCH GOVERNANCE**

Project Title: The Body of the Relationship: A Practice Based Exploration of the Relationship between the Body and its Environment.

Chief Investigator Dr Giuliano Campo  
Filter Committee UoA33 Creative Arts

This form should be completed by Filter Committees for all research project applications in categories A to D (\*for categories A, B, and D the University's own application form – RG1a and RG1b – will have been submitted; for category C, the national, or ORECNI, application form will have been submitted).

Where substantial changes are required the Filter Committee should return an application to the Chief Investigator for clarification/amendment; the Filter Committee can reject an application if it is thought to be unethical, inappropriate, incomplete or not valid/viable.

**Only when satisfied that its requirements have been met in full and any amendments are complete, the Filter Committee should make one of the following recommendations:**

The research proposal is complete, of an appropriate standard and is in

- Category A and the study may proceed\* x
- Category B and the study must be submitted to the University's Research Ethics Committee\*\* Please indicate briefly the reason(s) for this categorisation
- Category C and the study must be submitted to ORECNI along with the necessary supporting materials from the Research Governance Section\*\*\*
- Category D and the study must be submitted to the University's Research Ethics Committee\*\*

Signed: Brian Bridges Date: 20/4/18  
Chairperson/Administrator of Filter Committee RD: UoA33

**\*The application form and this assessment should now be returned to the Chief Investigator. The Filter Committee should retain a copy of the complete set of forms.**

**\*\* The application form and this assessment should now be returned to the Chief Investigator so that he/she can submit the application to the UUREC via the Research Governance section. The Filter Committee should retain a copy of the complete set of forms for their own records.**

**\*\*\* The application form and this assessment should now be returned to the Chief Investigator so that he/she can prepare for application to a NRES/ORECNI committee. The Filter Committee should retain a copy of the complete set of forms for their own records.**

**For all categories, details of the application and review outcome should be minuted using the agreed format and forwarded to the Research Governance section**

Signed: Date: 20/4/18

*Chairperson/Administrator of Filter Committee*

*Waste-is-land* immersive art installation, *Sky-field* immersive art installation

Dr Giuliano Campo

UoA33 Creative Arts

**Please complete the following**

The application should be accompanied by an appropriate and favourable Peer Review Report Form (if not, the Filter Committee should be prepared to address this as part of its review).

Please comment on the peer review (include whether or not there is evidence that the comments of the peer reviewers have been addressed).

Peer reviewers found no substantive issues.

Please provide an assessment of all component parts of the application, including questionnaires, interview schedules or outline areas for group discussion/ unstructured interviews.

Inclusion criteria were clear; questionnaires and considerations around engagement/ disengagement processes were carefully implemented.

Please comment on the consent form and information sheet, in particular the level of language and accessibility.

Accessible and clear information sheets and consent forms were provided.

Please comment on the qualifications of the Chief and other Investigators.

Campo: Chief Investigator: experienced lecturer and workshop-based arts practitioner, with significant international experience. Co-investigator: VCRS-funded PhD researcher with extensive experience in workshop-based arts content.

Please comment on the risks present in conducting the study and whether or not they have been addressed.

Risks are minimal, relating mostly to any potential for distress when immersing oneself within performance or installation; these risks are comparable with those of attending any arts exhibition and/ or performance and relate more to any 'triggering' issues; given the lack of sensitive subject matter, these risks are minimal.

Please indicate whether or not the ethical issues have been identified and addressed.

Potential risks and issues have been identified and addressed.

Please comment on whether or not the subjects are appropriate to the study and the inclusion/ exclusion criteria have been identified and listed.

Subjects are appropriate to the study and inclusion/exclusion criteria have been addressed and listed.

**20/4/18**

### **Ethical Approval for Installation/Performance Practice**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This notice is to confirm that ethical approval has been granted for participation within the following research project.

*The body of the relationship: A practice-based exploration of the relationship between the body and its environment. Three time-based art case studies informed by the notion of Butoh body*

Investigators: Dr Giuliano Campo (Lecturer); Eleni Kolliopoulou (PhD Researcher)

Ethical approval was granted based on peer review which took place within Research Unit

33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts and Film and Screen Studies at the School of Arts and Humanities, Ulster University.

#### **Dr Brian Bridges**

Research Director: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies  
School of Arts and Humanities  
Ulster University

Email: [bd.bridges@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:bd.bridges@ulster.ac.uk)  
Tel. 028-71675407

## B 3 RG1a APPLICATION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH ON HUMAN SUBJECTS

**PLEASE REFER TO THE NOTES OF GUIDANCE BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM.**  
(Available from the Research Governance website at <http://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/rg/>)

All sections of this form must be completed (use minimum font size 11). If the form is altered in any way it will be returned unconsidered by the Committee.

This form should be used for research in categories A, B and D

Do not use this form for research being conducted in collaboration with the NHS/HPSS (category C).

### SECTION A

**Chief Investigator**

Dr Giuliano Campo

**Title of Project**

The body of the relationship: A practice-based exploration of the relationship between the body and its environment. Three time-based art case studies informed by the notion of Butoh body

**Student and course (if applicable)**

Post graduate research PhD (practice based)

**Additional Investigators**

Kolliopoulou Eleni

### Declaration - Chief Investigator:

I confirm that

Y

- this project meets the definition for research in category\* (*please insert*)
- this project is viable and is of research or educational merit;
- all risks and ethical and procedural implications have been considered;
- the project will be conducted at all times in compliance with the research description/protocol and in accordance with the University's requirements on recording and reporting;
- this application has not been submitted to and rejected by another committee; and
- Permission has been granted to use all copyright materials including questionnaires and similar instruments

**Signed:**

**Date:**

--

**\*In addition, you should complete form RG1d for all category D research and form RG1e for both category B and D research**

#### **Peer Review**

- *Those conducting peer review should complete form RG2 and attach it to this form (RG1). RG1, RG2 and all associated materials should then be returned to the Chief Investigator.*
- *Depending upon the outcome of peer review, the Chief Investigator should arrange to submit to the Filter Committee, resubmit the application for further review or consider a new or substantially changed project. The application must not be submitted to the Filter Committee until the peer review process has been completed (except as permitted below)*
- ***Please note that peer review can be conducted by the Filter Committee if time and capacity allow. This is at the discretion of the Chairperson of each Filter Committee and is subject to change.***

#### **Filter Committee**

- *The application must be considered by the Filter Committee in accordance with the requirements of the University*
- *The Filter Committee should complete form RG3 and write to the Chief Investigator indicating the outcome of its review*
- *Depending upon the outcome of the Filter Committee review, the Chief Investigator should arrange to proceed with the research OR submit to the University's Research Ethics Committee OR resubmit the application for further review OR consider a new or substantially changed project*
- *The Filter Committee should retain a complete set of original forms.*

## **SECTION B**

### **1. Where will the research be undertaken?**

The research will be conducted in room MQ018 at Magee Campus, and in different exhibition spaces that have still to be confirmed.

### **2. a. What prior approval/funding has been sought or obtained to conduct this research? Please also provide the UU cost centre number if known**

The PhD student is in receipt of VCRS funding.

### **b. Please indicate any commercial interest in/sponsorship of the study**

None

### 3. Duration of the Project

Start: February 2018

End: December  
2018

Duration: 11 months

### 4. Background to and reason(s) for the Project

**Please provide a brief summary in language comprehensible to a lay person or non-expert. Full details must be provided in the description/protocol submitted with this application (see Notes of Guidance)**

The project is part of a practice-based research in the arts that addresses the relationship of the body in space. This research consists of three major artistic research projects that will spread through the academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. The attempt is to explore the field of installation art and encourage a focused approach upon the time of the fruition. This project will emphasise the interactivity between the audience and the installation and will further analyse their experience as such. The spectators will be admitted singly into the space and will engage with the installation. They may be interviewed afterwards about their experience.

### 5. Aims of the Project

**Please provide a brief summary in language comprehensible to a lay person or non-expert. Full details must be provided in the description/protocol submitted with this application (see Notes of Guidance)**

The aims of the project is to enrich the field of installation art with the embodied knowledge concerning the ontology of the body that is gained in Butoh seminars (Japanese contemporary dance) by the student. For this reason, the research projects will take the form of iterations of artistic practice that seek to expand and explore the bond between the body of the perceiver in the space adopting different means of expression. Different media will be deployed in an attempt of the development of hybrid art forms such as: audio and/or audio-visual apparatuses, task orientated group or individual experiences.

### 6. Procedures to be used

#### a. Methods

**Please provide a brief summary in language comprehensible to a lay person or non-expert. Full details must be provided in the description/protocol submitted with this application (see Notes of Guidance)**

The installations will aim to activate the audience's sensorial experience/ participation without causing any harm or distress. The feedback collected regarding their experience and will be discussed in the documentation of the projects. The feedback will be gathered in those ways:

The participant(s) might be filmed before, during or after the fruition of the artwork. This will occur prior their signing the consent form (attached). The participant(s) might be asked to write down their experience and hand the written material to the student. The participant(s) might be asked to produce a symbolic (non-verbal) feedback which be stored and further analysed by the student.



**b. Statistical techniques**

Focused addressing of the target groups  
Qualitative analysis of the feedback  
Critical writing upon the data

**7. Subjects:**

**a. How many subjects will be recruited to the study (by group if appropriate)?**

We will seek to gather material from 30 participants	3 groups of 10 participants

**b. Will any of the subjects be from the following vulnerable groups?**

**YES NO**

Children under 18

	X
	X
	X
	X
	X

Adults with learning or other disabilities

Very elderly people

Healthy volunteers who have a dependent or subordinate relationship to investigators

Other vulnerable groups

**If YES to any of the above, please specify and justify their inclusion**

None

**c. Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Please indicate, with reasons, the inclusion criteria for the project

We seek to include subjects with a close association to the fine arts as well as individuals with no prior experience. Participants will be recruited from the local arts community, and from the staff and students of the School of Arts and Humanities.

Please indicate, with reasons, any exclusion criteria for the project

**There are no exclusion criteria.**

**d. Will any inducements be offered? If 'Yes', please describe**

No

**e. Please describe how and where recruitment will take place**

Those events will be publicized through the University and relevant exhibition space's social media as well to the broader local artistic community. University students will be particularly encouraged to engage with the research projects.

**8. Ethical implications of the research**

Please provide an assessment of the ethical implications of the project

The ethical implications of the work represent a low risk to participants.

I will adhere to the University of Ulster's Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the Conduct of Research, as well as the University's Policy for the Governance of Research Involving Human Participants and the Accompanying Procedures documents.

We will protect anonymity of the participants should they wish their contributions to remain private and personal.

The data will be stored securely on a hard drive and will remain with Chief Investigator Dr Giuliano Campo for the duration of the process. The material will be anonymised.

A possible implication of the project would be to create an emotionally charged state to the participants, but the risk will be kept at minimum avoiding the use of images or perceptual stimuli that might result aggressive or excessive. The participants will be introduced verbally to the work prior to their experience and they will be explicitly given the alternative to interrupt at any given time they consider necessary for their psychophysical integrity.

**9. Could the research identify or indicate the existence of any undetected healthcare concern?**

Yes

☐

No

☒

If **Yes**, please indicate what might be detected and explain what action will be taken (e.g. inform subject's GP)

**10. Risk Assessment \*\***

Please indicate any risks to subjects or investigators associated with the project

A risk assessment has been carried out for the installation and the University's Health and Safety procedures have been implemented. The same process will apply in all further iterations of the project.

**\*\*If you wish, you can use form RG1c – Risk Assessment Record (available from the Research Governance website) to help you assess any risks involved**

**11. Precautions**

Please describe precautions to be taken to address the above

The space has been checked to ensure that it is safe. It will be lit at a low level, and all electrical cables will be taped securely to the floor. All electrical equipment has been PA tested. All hard surfaces will be covered with foam so that participants cannot hurt themselves as they move through the space. The artist will be present at the space during the viewings, to assist if anyone requires assistance. Participants are free to come and go at will.

**12. Consent form**

**It is assumed that as this study is being conducted on human subjects, an information sheet and associated consent form will be provided. A copy of the information sheet and form must be attached to this application. See Notes of Guidance.**

**If a consent form is not to be used, please provide a justification:**

Consent form will be used.

**13. Care of personal information**

Please describe the measures that will be taken to ensure that subjects' personal data/information will be stored appropriately and made available only to those named as investigators associated with the project.

All information will be stored on a secured system in line with University protocols. Chief Investigator will retain portable hard drive in secured storage.

**14. Copyright**

Has permission been granted to use all copyright materials including questionnaires and similar instruments?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If **No**, please provide the reason

N/A

**Once you have completed this form you should also complete form RG1d for all category D research and form RG1e for both category B and D research**

# B 4 UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

## RG1a APPLICATION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH ON HUMAN SUBJECTS

**PLEASE REFER TO THE NOTES OF GUIDANCE BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM.**  
(Available from the Research Governance website at <http://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/rg/>)

All sections of this form must be completed (use minimum font size 11). If the form is altered in any way it will be returned unconsidered by the Committee.

This form should be used for research in categories A, B and D

Do not use this form for research being conducted in collaboration with the NHS/HPSS (category C).

### SECTION A

Chief Investigator

Dr Giuliano Campo

Title of Project

The body of the relationship: A practice-based exploration of the relationship between the body and its environment. Three time-based art case studies informed by the notion of Butoh body

Student and course (if applicable)

Post graduate research PhD (practice based)

Additional Investigators

Kolliopoulou Eleni

### Declaration - Chief Investigator:

I confirm that

Y

- this project meets the definition for research in category\* (**please insert**)
- this project is viable and is of research or educational merit;
- all risks and ethical and procedural implications have been considered;
- the project will be conducted at all times in compliance with the research description/protocol and in accordance with the University's requirements on recording and reporting;
- this application has not been submitted to and rejected by another committee; and
- Permission has been granted to use all copyright materials including questionnaires and similar instruments

Signed:

Date:

--

**\*In addition, you should complete form RG1d for all category D research and form RG1e for both category B and D research**

#### **Peer Review**

- *Those conducting peer review should complete form RG2 and attach it to this form (RG1). RG1, RG2 and all associated materials should then be returned to the Chief Investigator.*
- *Depending upon the outcome of peer review, the Chief Investigator should arrange to submit to the Filter Committee, resubmit the application for further review or consider a new or substantially changed project. The application must not be submitted to the Filter Committee until the peer review process has been completed (except as permitted below)*
- ***Please note that peer review can be conducted by the Filter Committee if time and capacity allow. This is at the discretion of the Chairperson of each Filter Committee and is subject to change.***

#### **Filter Committee**

- *The application must be considered by the Filter Committee in accordance with the requirements of the University*
- *The Filter Committee should complete form RG3 and write to the Chief Investigator indicating the outcome of its review*
- *Depending upon the outcome of the Filter Committee review, the Chief Investigator should arrange to proceed with the research OR submit to the University's Research Ethics Committee OR resubmit the application for further review OR consider a new or substantially changed project*
- *The Filter Committee should retain a complete set of original forms.*

The second research installation project will be presented at Glassbox inside Belfast Campus and the third project will take place at Pollen Gallery in Belfast.

- 2. a. What prior approval/funding has been sought or obtained to conduct this research? Please also provide the UU cost centre number if known**

The PhD student is in receipt of VCRS funding.

- b. Please indicate any commercial interest in/sponsorship of the study**

None

#### **3. Duration of the Project**

Start: 23.04 2018

End: September  
2018

Duration: 5 months

#### 4. Background to and reason(s) for the Project

**Please provide a brief summary in language comprehensible to a lay person or non-expert. Full details must be provided in the description/protocol submitted with this application (see Notes of Guidance)**

The project is part of a practice-based research in the arts that addresses the relationship of the body in space. This research consists of three major artistic research projects that will spread through the academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. This application is for the second and third stages of the project; the second and third artistic/installation outputs, which are for an immersive artwork which audience members are encouraged to place themselves within and follow some simple tasks explained by the researcher. Finally, the audience is asked to describe their sensations and feelings as a result.

The attempt is to explore the field of installation art and encourage a focused approach upon the body awareness of the spectator. In doing so, the iterations will involve different artistic mediums with the aim to further expand an interdisciplinary intersection of Installation art and Performance art; they are performative installations, which are here perceived as a hybrid art form concerned with direct sensory/embodied experience since it is informed by the notion of the Butoh body. This project will emphasise the interactivity between the audience and the installation and will further analyse their experience as such.

#### 6. Aims of the Project

**Please provide a brief summary in language comprehensible to a lay person or non-expert. Full details must be provided in the description/protocol submitted with this application (see Notes of Guidance)**

The aims of the project are to enrich the field of installation art with the embodied knowledge concerning the ontology of the relationship between the body and its environment that is gained in Butoh seminars (Japanese contemporary dance) by the student. The first seminar attended, took place on October 2017 and was held by Atsushi Takenouchi. The student is going to take part to a second intensive Butoh seminar on June 2018. The former will be held by Masaki Iwana. The research projects will take the form of iterations of artistic practice that seek to expand and explore the bond between the body of the perceiver in the space adopting different means of expression. The installations will aim to activate the audience's sensorial experience/ participation without causing any harm or distress. The researcher will collect feedback from their experience and discuss it in the documentation of the projects. The feedback documentation will vary in base of the specific needs of every project, which in part is exploring also how the fact of been alone, been seen from somebody else/ being within a group is influencing our body awareness and connection to the surroundings. Therefore, the feedback will be gathered in those ways: The participants will be asked to fill in a written questionnaire after their fruition. In the second and third project the participant(s) will be filmed and photographed during the fruition of the artwork. This will occur prior their signing the consent form (attached). Consequently, the participant(s) will be asked to write down their experience and hand the written material to the student.

#### 6. Procedures to be used

##### a. Methods

**Please provide a brief summary in language comprehensible to a lay person or non-expert. Full details must be provided in the description/protocol submitted with this application (see Notes of Guidance)**

Qualitative research methods based on anonymised questionnaires with free response sections will be deployed in an attempt to understand the role of installation materials, their combination, and spatial construction in the embodied experience of the artwork.

The questions will focus primarily on aspects of sensory and temporal experience and their relationship with the form and construction of the artwork. These questionnaires will be used to address issues around the connection between audience experiences and the artist-researcher's practice in the context of aesthetics and a conceptual framework of interactive, immersive installation practices.

The second research project, is entitled Waste-is-land and is an installation formed by a pot with a plant hanging from the ceiling in the middle of the space, 2 loudspeakers and an mp3 player, a suitcase with clothes and coffee ground and an empty pot. The installation has been done by the agency Potatobred (<http://www.potatobred.com/>) in a neat and professional fashion.

During the installation there will be different slots to book where the audience in small groups of three persons (the artist will be part of the group) will enter the space and will divide the clothes from the coffee grounds in separate places indicated clearly. They will then be asked to change the position of the clothes within the installation. The whole action will be repeated 15 times during the week 23 to 30 April.

The third research project is entitled Skyfield and is a video installation. Running from the 23<sup>rd</sup> till the 30<sup>th</sup> of August which consists of 2 video projections, a clothesline, paper bags, a textile (2mx3m), rice, 2 loudspeakers and an mp3. A professional installation team will be asked to install the piece on behalf of the researcher. The audience will enter as a group in the space which is quite big to host up to 20 persons that move with ease. The persons will be asked to enter the installation space, pick up the rice and store it in paper bags provided by the researcher. The action will be repeated in the next evenings during the week that the show will stay open to the audience.

**b. Statistical techniques**

Please provide details of the statistical techniques to be used within the project description/protocol (see Notes of Guidance)

N/A anonymised interviews and qualitative research methods will be utilised.

**7. Subjects:**

**a. How many subjects will be recruited to the study (by group if appropriate)?**

We will seek to gather material from at least 10 participants for this iteration of the project.	These participants will engage with the artwork on an individual basis. (The artwork will be available to access on a number of days to facilitate this.)
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**b. Will any of the subjects be from the following vulnerable groups -**

	YES	NO
Children under 18		X
Adults with learning or other disabilities		X
Very elderly people		X
Healthy volunteers who have a dependent or subordinate relationship to investigators		X
Other vulnerable groups		X

**If YES to any of the above, please specify and justify their inclusion**

None

**c. Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Please indicate, with reasons, the inclusion criteria for the project

We seek to include subjects with a close association to the fine arts as well as individuals with no prior experience (specialist and non-specialist audiences so that reactions can be compared using qualitative methods). (Those who have not previously experienced similar work will be provided with additional briefings in advance to ensure that they understand the immersive nature of the installation and can disengage and leave the space on demand). Participants will be recruited via the local arts community, and from the staff and students of Ulster University.

Please indicate, with reasons, any exclusion criteria for the project



**There are no exclusion criteria.**

**d. Will any inducements be offered? If 'Yes', please describe**

No

**e. Please describe how and where recruitment will take place**

Those events will be publicized through the University and relevant exhibition space's social media as well to the broader local artistic community. University students and staff will particularly be encouraged to engage with the research projects. The research projects/ events will also be advertised through researcher's social media contacts and general audience Art portals including Bbeyond newsletter, Visual Artists Ireland, Dance Resource NI.

**8. Ethical implications of the research**

Please provide an assessment of the ethical implications of the project

The ethical implications of the work represent a low risk to participants.

The researcher will adhere to the University of Ulster's Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the Conduct of Research, as well as the University's Policy for the Governance of Research Involving Human Participants and the Accompanying Procedures documents.

We will protect anonymity of the participants should they wish their contributions to remain private and personal.

The data will be stored securely on a hard drive and will remain with Chief Investigator Dr Giuliano Campo for the duration of the process. The material will be anonymised.

The participants will be introduced verbally to the work prior to their experience and they will be explicitly given the alternative to interrupt at any given time they consider necessary for their psychophysical wellbeing. A possible implication of the project would be to create an emotionally charged state to the participants, but the risk will be kept at minimum avoiding the use of images or perceptual stimuli that might result aggressive or excessive. *There is no planned use of disturbing/ offensive images or material that might upset audience members.*

**9. Could the research identify or indicate the existence of any undetected healthcare concern?**

Yes

☐

No

☒

If **Yes**, please indicate what might be detected and explain what action will be taken (e.g. inform subject's GP)

#### 10. Risk Assessment \*\*

Please indicate any risks to subjects or investigators associated with the project

A risk assessment has been carried out for Seabed (first research project) and the University's Health and Safety procedures have been implemented (see attached risk assessment document).

**\*\*If you wish, you can use form RG1c – Risk Assessment Record (available from the Research Governance website) to help you assess any risks involved**

#### 11. Precautions

Please describe precautions to be taken to address the above

The space of the second and third research project has been checked to ensure that it is safe. The second project will be lit with natural light and will be open during the daylight time from 10am till 8pm. The third project will be soft lit because there will be a video projection but there will be enough light to allow a safe passage through the installation.

The installation of the second and third project are held by a professional team of workers that takes full responsibility of the liability of the structures.

All electrical cables will be taped securely to the floor. All electrical equipment has been PA tested. All hard surfaces will be covered with foam so that participants cannot hurt themselves as they enter the space. The artist will be present at the space during the viewings, to assist if anyone requires assistance. Participants are free to come and go at will.

#### 12. Consent form

**It is assumed that as this study is being conducted on human subjects, an information sheet and associated consent form will be provided. A copy of the information sheet and form must be attached to this application. See Notes of Guidance.**

**If a consent form is not to be used, please provide a justification:**

A consent form will be used. The consent form will provide a description of the project to participants in advance of their entering the space. Their participation in the project will be based on entirely non-invasive qualitative research methods; a simple anonymised questionnaire based on free responses to questions. Participants are free to decide not to complete the questionnaire.

#### 14. Care of personal information

Please describe the measures that will be taken to ensure that subjects' personal data/information will be stored appropriately and made available only to those named as investigators associated with the project.

All information will be stored on a secured system in line with University data management protocols. The chief Investigator will retain portable hard drive in secured storage.

**14. Copyright**

Has permission been granted to use all copyright materials including questionnaires and similar instruments?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If **No**, please provide the reason

N/A

Once you have completed this form you should also complete form RG1d for all category D research and form RG1e for both category B and D research

